

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Moderation Policy

19th February, 2019.

1.0 Philosophy

University College of Management Studies understands moderation to be a process for facilitating and developing consistency of, and comparability between, assessment judgments made in a range of assessment contexts against differing assessment criteria. The focus of the moderation process is to assure and enhance the quality and accuracy of assessment by systematic examination of the validity, reliability and plausibility of grades with respect to College standards, unit learning objectives, course outcomes, and assessment criteria.

2.0 Moderation Roles

Moderation is a multi-stage, collaborative effort between senior UCOMS academics, teaching staff, external academics, boards and committees, and student administration. Each of these participants has specific roles to play in the moderation process. Key moderation roles are outlined below.

3.0 Academic Director and Registrar

- ❖ Take final responsibility for the adjustment, allocation, and reporting of grades, in keeping with internal and external moderation and benchmarking arrangements.
- ❖ Monitor moderation activities within and across Departments and courses.
- ❖ Ensure that moderation activities are adequately resourced.
- ❖ Monitor structural and administrative arrangements pertaining to moderation, and their impact on moderation activities, reviewing and adjusting such arrangements as and where necessary.
- ❖ Include consideration of academic moderation outcomes in performance review processes as appropriate (Academic Director).
- ❖ Prepare moderation reports (Director of Quality or Registrar).
- ❖ Work with Heads to monitor the implementation of Moderation report recommendations (Academic Director).

4.0 Deans and Heads of Departments

- Lead and manage School-based moderation activities.
- Cultivate an appreciation amongst staff and students of moderation as a way of enhancing assessment practice and outcomes.
- Monitor assessment arrangements influencing the effectiveness of moderation, ensuring that the Academic Director is made aware of matters requiring attention.
- In consultation with the Academic Director, address academic and administrative issues, problems or concerns identified during moderation processes.

5.0 Academic Staff

- Participate in moderation activities, providing qualitative and quantitative data to support assessment decisions as required.
- Contribute to a climate of openness by offering and receiving disciplinary- and assessment-based advice and expertise.
- Develop an awareness of assessment arrangements influencing the effectiveness of moderation and ensure the Head/Director is aware of any matters requiring attention.

6.0 External Moderators

- Monitor, and provide advice on, the validity and credibility of assessment methods and instruments.
- Monitor, and provide advice on, standards of assessment and the appropriateness of assessment decisions.
- Monitor, and provide advice on, moderation processes and procedures.
- Provide any other commentary or advice as may be necessary or appropriate to enhance the quality of assessment, grading and moderation across the College.

7.0 Committees

- The Moderation Committee (comprising the Academic Director, Director of Academic Development, Director of Quality, Registrar and an External Senior Academic) is the Sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee tasked with the moderation of assessment practices and outcomes.
- The Teaching and Learning Committee is the Sub-committee of the Academic Board responsible for the management of the University College's learning and teaching activities.
- The Academic Board deliberates on the outcomes of the semester's assessment and moderation activities, advising on and endorsing processes as appropriate.

8.0 Assessment, Moderation and Processes

An overview of assessment, moderation and approval processes is provided below. These processes are supported by, and consistent with, relevant University College policies, procedures and guidelines.

8.1 Assessment

8.1.1 Standards of assessment are, in consultation with internal and external academics, established by the Academic Director for each NAB Qualification Level, and published in various locations, e.g., in the Staff Handbook, Course Unit Regulations, Sample Assessment Matrices, Exemplar Essays, and Nominal Grading Distributions.

8.1.2 Heads of Departments and Program Directors (in consultation and collaboration with the Academic Director as appropriate) make standards of assessment clear to academic staff through staff meetings, professional development events and written communications.

8.1.3 Heads of the various departments and Program Director (in consultation and collaboration with the Academic Director as appropriate) ensure that assessments published in course unit outlines are consistent with College and NAB standards, contain detailed assessment criteria, and are consistent with course and unit learning outcomes and College Graduate Attributes.

8.1.4 Academic Staff mark students' submitted work according to unit assessment criteria, published assessment rubrics, and agreed University standards.

8.2 Department-based Moderation

8.2.1 At the end of each semester Heads/Directors and academic staff from each Departments meet to discuss assessment. The purpose of this meeting is to review assessment processes, procedures, and tasks – identifying where possible, deficiencies in assessment or inconsistencies in marks and modifying such marks as necessary.

8.2.2 Marks and unit grades (as amended) are then presented to a formal department-by-department moderation meeting including the Head/Director, Department academic staff, an external moderator, the Academic Director, Registrar and Director of Quality. The Registrar is responsible for the collation, capture, presentation, integrity and privacy of marks and grades across all units offered in each semester.

8.2.3 This Departments-based Moderation Meeting reviews the marks and grades allocated to each students in each unit, providing and reviewing additional information or advice pertinent to marks and grades in order that an initial determination concerning the validity and reliability of grades can be made. A representative selection of transcripts of assignments (across units and differing grade levels) is provided in the Moderation Meeting in order to correlate marks and grades awarded against 'hard' assessment data.

8.2.4 Amendments to marks and grades are made and documented in the context of the formal Moderation Meeting as appropriate. Other information (e.g., reasons for grades awarded, notes on student progression, etc.) pertinent to assessment and moderation is also captured at the Meeting.

8.2.5 On the basis of its deliberations, the formal Moderation Meeting makes a recommendation to the Moderation Committee that the assessment results as amended be accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the academic performance of students in the given semester.

8.3 Between-Department Moderation

8.3.1 The Moderation Committee takes the amended results and recommendations from each formal Moderation Meeting and compares these results across Departments. This cross-Departments comparison recognizes that:

8.3.2 Marks, unit grades and (ultimately) qualifications are awarded by the University as a whole not any individual marker or Department;

8.3.3 Heads of Department, Program Directors and Academic staff resolve all the potential Conflict of Interest with respect to the awarding of marks and grades; and students should not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by idiosyncratic marking philosophies or practices that may arise from time to time in a given Department(s).

8.3.4 On the basis of cross-departmental comparisons (which include descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of within- and between-department marks and grades), the Moderation Committee may make additional adjustments to marks and/or grades in order to ensure within-Department consistency and between-Department comparability of grades.

8.4 Approval of Grades

8.4.1 Grades as amended by the Moderation Committee are presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee for review and comment. At this stage the Teaching and Learning Committee may question and/or comment on any of the processes and/or results of any within- or between-department moderations of grades. On the basis of its deliberations, the Teaching and Learning Committee accepts assessment results as amended as a true and accurate reflection of the academic performance of students in the given semester.

8.4.2 Once approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee, grades awarded for a given semester are made available to students by the Registrar.

8.4.3 The Academic Board receives Moderation summaries from the Teaching and Learning Committee and reviews Moderation processes and procedures as appropriate.

8.5 Procedures for the Appointment of External Moderators

8.5.1 External moderators will be academics from higher education institutions within Ghana.

8.5.2 External moderators must be academically qualified at least one level above the qualification being moderated.

8.5.3 Heads of Departments are responsible for identifying and recommending external moderators.

8.5.4 The Head of Departments submits a list of the external moderators to the Moderation Committee.

8.5.5 External moderators are approved by the Moderation Committee.

8.5.6 A letter of appointment is issued to each external moderator by the Head of Department.

8.5.7 External moderators will normally be changed at least every three years.