

3

Moderation and Variation

Purpose

Course [assessment](#) methods are approved and reviewed as part of the University's program approval process. This section of the Manual describes the principles and procedures that underpin moderation and variation of course [assessment](#) methods.

Relevant to

- All courses offered as part of:
 - an enabling program
 - an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program
 - single course and cross-institutional enrolments
 - Open Universities Australia (OUA) units delivered by UniSA
- Students eligible for variations or alternative arrangements to [assessment](#) methods. This includes students with disabilities, Indigenous Australian students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and students who provide evidence of [unexpected or exceptional circumstances](#) (see [clauses 7.5 to 7.8](#)).

Cross-references

- [A-35A: Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements](#)
- [A-42: Honours Programs](#)
- [A-49: Postgraduate Coursework Degrees with a significant research component](#)
- [C-7: Students with disabilities](#)
- *Coursework Program Approval Manual and associated guidelines*

3.1 Moderation of [assessment](#)

- 3.1.1 Moderation of [assessment](#) includes the planning and operation of [assessment](#) design and approaches to marking, as well as processes associated with the review of judgements made about students' results or [grades](#) and feedback. This view of moderation is founded on the importance of using valid and fair [assessment](#) items as well as having valid and reliable judgements made on the quality of students' work.
- 3.1.2 Processes which result in the implementation of high quality [assessment](#) practices, including external benchmarking, are critically important in relation to the commitment the University makes to key stakeholder groups, such as students, industry and the general community, to the provision of high quality education.
- 3.1.3 Each division will ensure that moderation practices in its schools and courses are documented and consistent with the view of moderation outlined in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. Moderation practices must specify:
- a. the manner in which all [assessment](#) items in all courses are valid and fair ways of measuring student achievement in relation to learning outcomes
 - b. practices which enhance consistency in judgments made about student achievement in and across courses, including the use of:
 - (i) marking guides, keys, schemes and rubrics to promote shared understandings about expectations and performance in [assessment](#)
 - (ii) second marking – where a second marker assesses a representative sample of marked work using a minimum of the square root of the student cohort plus all fails

- (iii) double-blind marking – where all [assessment](#) items are blind marked independently by two assessors in cases of high value assignments and dissertations
 - c. expectations relating to the review of [marks](#) or [grades](#) awarded to students' work, including feedback, and any subsequent actions that may be required before the [marks](#) or [grades](#) are released to students
 - d. equivalent practices for alternative forms of delivery, for example, offshore or external
 - e. the nature and timing of external benchmarking of moderation practices.
- 3.1.4 An important part of the University's approach to setting and maintaining consistent, University-wide standards is that these moderation approaches are approved by Academic Board.

3.2 Variations to [assessment](#)

- 3.2.1 [Assessment](#) methods, tasks and timelines must be specified in the course outline distributed to students by the first class of the course.
- 3.2.2 It is expected that a student will complete the [assessment](#) requirements for a course within the relevant [study period](#) unless the student:
- a. qualifies for a variation due to:
 - (i) [supplementary assessment](#) (see [clause 7.2](#))
 - (ii) [deferred assessment](#) (see [clause 7.3](#))
 - (iii) [special consideration](#) (see [clause 7.4](#))
 - (iv) a delay in the marking of the final [assessment](#) (see [clause 8.2.4](#)), or
 - (v) provisions as set out in the student's Disability Access Plan (see clause 3.2.3)
 - b. is aware of circumstances for which they will require a variation to [assessment](#). In these cases they must lodge their request with the [course coordinator](#) within the first two weeks of the course, (or equivalent for accelerated or intensive teaching)
 - c. requests a variation to [assessment](#) methods, tasks and timelines on the grounds of [unexpected or exceptional circumstances](#) (see [clauses 7.5 to 7.8](#)). Variations which are required on these grounds should be discussed with the [course coordinator](#) at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.2.3 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy [C-7: Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Unit disability service, or UniSA transnational administration office, as applicable.

3.3 Variations to [examinations](#)

- 3.3.1 The following students are entitled to the variations specified under clause 3.3.2 unless the course outline specifies that no variations are available:
- a. Indigenous Australian students
 - b. students of non-English speaking background (NESB students) who were:
 - (i) born outside Australia
 - (ii) arrived in Australia less than ten years previously, and

- (iii) speak a language other than English at home
 - c. offshore students of non-English speaking background where the language spoken at home is not English, and the medium of instruction is English.
- 3.3.2 Students who meet the eligibility criteria above will be entitled to the following provisions, unless the course outline specifies that no variations are available:
- a. extra time to be used for reading or writing. This will normally be an extra ten minutes per hour for every hour of standard [examination](#) time, and
 - b. the use of a non-annotated English language or [bilingual print dictionary](#) for Indigenous Australian students, or
 - c. the use of a non-annotated [bilingual print dictionary](#) for students identified in clause 3.3.1 b, or c above.
- 3.3.3 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy [C-7: Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Unit disability service or UniSA partner administration office, as applicable.
- 3.3.4 Provisions may be made in relation to difficulties associated with travel to [examination](#) venues, such as significant financial hardship and/or carer responsibilities. Provisions will be determined on a case by case basis and will require supporting documentation such as a recommendation from a student counsellor.
- 3.3.5 Where additional materials or resources are allowed as a variation to [examination](#) procedures, these materials must not be enhanced or tampered with in any way that provides an additional advantage to the student. For example, if a student is allowed to take an [English language print dictionary](#) into the [examination](#) but other resources are not allowed, the dictionary must not have any additional notes or markings in it.
- 3.3.6 A student who is entitled to variations, as specified above, will have access to these variations for the duration of their program, unless they enrol in a course that specifies in the course outline that an alternative arrangement is in place, or that there are no variations available.
- 3.3.7 Data which is collected during enrolment and held on the student record system will identify students in one of the categories above. Academic staff are not required to make decisions on a case-by-case basis regarding eligibility for variations to [examinations](#).

3.4 Extension to [assessment](#) task deadlines

- 3.4.1 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual [assessment](#) tasks may be granted on medical or compassionate grounds or special circumstances (see clauses [7.6 - 7.8](#))
- 3.4.2 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual [assessment](#) tasks will be granted to externally [enrolled students](#) due to late dispatch of course materials, providing the student enrolled in the course prior to the commencement of the [study period](#).
- 3.4.3 Applications for an extension must be lodged via the [learnonline course site](#) before the due date for the [assessment](#) task and must be supported, where appropriate, by documentary evidence. The [course coordinator](#) will respond via the [learnonline course site](#), normally within two working days. All correspondence, including documentary evidence will be stored within [learnonline](#).