UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Internal and External Moderation and the Processing of Results

Type of Document:	Regulation
Purpose:	To provide terminology, principles and procedures of internal and external moderation at SU.
Approved by:	SU Council
Date of Approval:	29 Setember 2014
Date of Implementation:	October 2014
Date of Next Revision:	As needed
Date of Previous Revision(s):	2006
Policy Owner[1]:	Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching
Policy Curator[2]:	Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning
Keywords:	Internal Moderation, External Moderation, Results, External Examination, External Evaluators
Validity:	In the event of an inconsistency between different versions of this Regulation, the English version prevails.

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Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results

As approved by SU Senate on 29 August 2014 and SU Council on
29 September 2014

Reference number of this document	
HEMIS classification	
Purpose	Internal and external moderation
Type of document	Regulations
Accessibility	Internal and external
Date of implementation	October 2014
Revision date	2020
Previous revisions	2006
Owner of these rules	Vice Rector: Learning and Teaching
Institutional functionary (curator) responsible for these rules	Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning
Date of approval	29 September 2014
Approved by	Council
Keywords	Moderation, results, exit-level modules, moderator

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the culture of quality assurance at Stellenbosch University (SU), peer evaluation of the assessment process of all modules and programmes is standard practice.

Peer evaluation takes place through the:
a) Internal moderation of the assessment process of all modules (per semester/year)
b) External moderation of the assessment process of all **exit-level modules**[1] (per semester/year)
c) Internal and/or external evaluation of all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (non-professional and professional programmes), as prescribed by SU's quality assurance system (on a cyclic basis):

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[1] **Exit-level modules** are the (i) final year models of a B Degree or Diploma, and (ii) all the modules of a one-year programme, whether a postgraduate programme (Postgraduate Diploma, Honours or structured Master's Programme) or an undergraduate programme (Higher Certificate, Advanced Diploma)

- Professional programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) are evaluated and accredited by external professional bodies by means of the criteria and procedures of the relevant bodies.
- Postgraduate programmes are evaluated by means of the programme accreditation criteria of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) when evaluating the home departments of these programmes.
- Undergraduate programmes that are not evaluated by a HEQC-approved professional body, are evaluated by the faculties by means of the HEQC's programme accreditation criteria.

d) External examination of all master's theses and doctoral dissertations.

The terminology, principles and procedures for a) internal and b) external moderation at SU are set out in this document. The c) evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is set out in a separate policy document, i.e. SU's *Quality Assurance Framework*, while the procedures for d) external examinations are described in the *Yearbook Part 1*.

2. TERMINOLOGY

2.1 Assessment and assessors

> *Definition of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)*: **Assessment** – *Systematic evaluation of a student's ability to demonstrate the acquisition of the learning goals intended in a curriculum*

2.1.1 **Assessment** is the process by which information about students' learning progress and quality of learning is systematically collected, interpreted and disseminated (SU's *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2002-2004*, Senate decision 19 September 2001). The information may contribute to identifying shortcomings (diagnostic assessment), the promotion of learning (formative assessment) and/or the calculation of students' class and performance marks (summative assessment).

2.1.2 Assessment includes the formulation of **assessment assignments** (e.g. setting a class test or examination paper), as well as the evaluation of students' **assessment products** (e.g. marking essays, examination answer scripts, oral examinations, and reports).

2.1.3 An **assessor** is a trained member of staff[2] of the University officially appointed by the University to deal with the examination of a specific module.

2.1.4 The **assessment process** includes the following:

a) The formulation of assessment assignments and criteria (memorandum/marking scheme) that test students' learning according to specified standards and are aligned with the module outcomes

b) The editing of examination questions and other assessment assignments (including language editing and mark allocation) to ensure that they are formulated clearly and unambiguously, and may reasonably be completed within the allocated time

c) The assessment assignments written by students under properly regulated conditions (e.g. examination opportunities) in specific cases

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[2] Assessor training at SU consists in newly appointed lecturers following the PRONTAK programme, and in all lecturers participating on a continuous basis in discourse and other training opportunities within the context of a department and faculty, aimed at improving their assessment literacy. The policy document entitled Assessment policy and practices at Stellenbosch University (Chapter 5), details SU's system of assessor training.

d) The marking of assessment assignments by the assessor(s)/examiner(s) according to approved assessment criteria

e) The calculation of marks and entering of marks on a marks sheet, if summative by nature.

2.2 Moderation

> *HEQC Definition: **Moderator** – A person, apart from the examiner, that is appointed by the institution to be responsible for ensuring the standard of the examination and its accompanying marking framework and response exemplars, and for marking a representative sample of examination responses*

2.2.1 **Moderation** is the process during which the reliability, correctness and validity of the assessment process (examination and marking processes, and the results of a module) are checked and validated for summative assessment assignments and products. Moderation is carried out by peer group academics or professional peers.

2.2.2 An **internal moderator** is a trained staff member of the University who has been officially appointed by a Faculty Board (on behalf of Senate) to facilitate the internal moderation of the examination process of a specific module.

2.2.3 An **external moderator** is a competent person who is not a staff member of the University and who has been officially appointed by a Faculty Board (on behalf of Senate) to facilitate the external moderation of a module. External moderators should be unattached to the University and exclude 'extraordinary appointments'.

2.2.4 The **moderation process** (internal and external) includes the following:

Prior to the examination/assessment opportunity:

a) Verify that the assessment assignments (i.e. the examination questions and/or other assignments) are constructively aligned with the learning outcomes.

b) Verify that the assessment assignments conform to the required standard. This includes that, in the case of modules that use the examinations system, the assessment assignments of the first and second examination opportunities are on the same level.

c) Communicate suggestions for improving the assessment assignments to the assessor in writing on a reporting form as in **Annexure A** (or on a faculty-specific format that comprises at least the elements provided in Annexure A).

On completion of the examination/assessment opportunity:

d) Verify, by means of a stratified sample, that the evaluation of the assessment products was fair and reasonable.

- The stratification is done on the grounds of the summative marks obtained by the students in their assessment products, among other things, by taking samples of products that have obtained the highest and lowest scores, as well as the assessment products that lie on the boundary of a pass mark or a distinction.

- The size of the stratified sample depends on the number of assessment products marked per assessment assignment and the type of assessment assignment moderated.

- As a guideline it is suggested that in the case of <20 assessment products, half of the assessment products be moderated in full by marking the products

according to the memorandum/marking scheme (not only checking the marks), while the other half be moderated through a cursory check. In cases where there are ≥20 students, a selection of at least ten assessment products is recommended, with a cursory check of a further 20% of the assessment products.

- The above guideline may be adapted if the relevant faculty board is of the opinion that the nature of the assessment assignment and the size of the sample are sufficient to ensure the quality of the moderation on the marking work done.

e) Verify the reliability of the system in terms of which marks are calculated and recorded.

f) Report on the moderation process (among other things, in the case of professional councils, by indicating that matters of interest to such councils, did in fact receive attention from the moderator) and make written recommendations to the assessor on a reporting form as in **Annexure B** (or on a faculty-specific format that comprises at least the elements provided in Annexure B).

3.   INFORMATION ON THE UNIVERSITY'S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The University has five examinations every year, namely the first June examination, followed immediately by the second June examination opportunity ('re-examination'); the first November examination, followed immediately by the second November examination opportunity ('re-examination'); and the January examination, which is meant exclusively for honours and master's modules, in cases where departments would rather examine these modules in January.

Assessment may take place through a system of examinations, continuous assessment or flexible assessment. Full particulars of the University's examinations system and assessment policy are available online in SU's *Yearbook Part 1.*

4.   POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR MODERATION

Every student should have the assurance that his/her assessment results are reliable and correct.

5.   EXTENT OF INTERNAL MODERATION

A representative selection (see 2.2.4 (d)) of the assessment assignments and products used to compile students' performance mark for a module is moderated **internally** for **all** modules offered by the University (i.e. all modules at all levels), as follows:

a) In the case of modules that use the **examinations system**, the **assessment assignments** (question papers) for all five examinations are moderated internally before the examination is undertaken. For **exit-level modules**, the internal moderator pays special attention to the general editing of assessment assignments (e.g. the formulation of questions). The assessment products (answer scripts) of the representative sample are internally moderated in full (marked, and marks checked) after every examination and before the marks are finalised. For exit-level modules, the internal moderator checks the marks calculated for the sample of answer scripts (for the assessment products of the first and the second examination opportunities),

before sending them to the external moderator, and focusses especially on border-line cases (in terms of pass or pass with distinction).

b) In the case of modules that use a **continuous or flexible assessment system**, all assessment assignments and a selection of assessment products that collectively represent at least 50% of the performance mark, are moderated internally. For exit-level modules, the internal moderator pays special attention to the general editing of assessment assignments (e.g. the formulation of questions) and the correctness of the marks calculated for the assessment products, before sending them to the external moderator.

c) The internal moderation process takes place during all five examinations (June examination, June re-examination; November examination, November re-examination; and January examination). The same deadlines for finalising results apply to modules that use continuous or flexible assessment.

6. EXTENT OF EXTERNAL MODERATION

A representative selection (see 2.2.4 (d)) of the assessment assignments and products used to compile students' performance mark for a module is moderated **externally** for **all exit-level modules** (undergraduate and postgraduate), as follows:

a) In the case of modules that use the **examinations system**, the **assessment assignments** (the question papers) for all five examinations are moderated externally before the examination is undertaken. The external moderator pays special attention to the constructive alignment of assessment assignments with the outcomes of the module, and to checking whether the assessment assignments of the first and second examination opportunities were set at the same level and standard. The assessment products (answer scripts) are moderated externally **after the second opportunity** and before the results are finalised. The external moderator pays attention to the standard set for marking the assessment products, and focusses especially on border-line cases (in terms of pass or pass with distinction).

b) In the case of modules that use a **continuous or flexible assessment system**, a set of assessment assignments that collectively represents at least 50% of the performance mark, is moderated externally with a representative sample of its assessment products, before the results are finalised. The external moderator pays attention to the standard set for marking assessment products, and focusses especially on border-line cases (in terms of pass or pass with distinction).

c) The external moderation process is required for all **exit-level modules**. Faculties and departments have the discretion to decide on the way to deal with continuous and flexible assessment products specifically, in cases where formative feedback needs to be given to students and external moderation would cause a delay in turn-around time. Where applicable (e.g. for practical art, music or theatre studies modules), external moderation of assessment products may be replaced by an external examination process. The same time scheduling that applies to finalising results applies to modules that use the examinations system, the continuous or flexible assessments.

d) In the case of postgraduate programmes with a number of specialist modules that have only a few registered students in every module, a single external moderator may moderate a related group of modules (e.g. modules that fall in a particular knowledge

area) as a whole, and not every module separately. In such cases, the external moderator need not moderate the assessment assignments prior to the assessments. This procedure does not apply to comprehensive research assignments (of 50 credits or more).

e) Faculties may submit exceptions relating to the extent of the moderation process for specific exit-level modules to the Committee for Learning and Teaching, for consideration, provided that they comply with paragraph 4, *Point of departure for moderation* (see paragraph 13, *Exceptions in relation to the extent of moderation*).

7. REQUIREMENTS FOR MODERATORS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

a) Moderators usually have a qualification on the same or at a higher National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level than that of the module (or thesis or dissertation) they are moderating.

b) Moderators possess the requisite competence and academic standing in the subject field(s) in which they are moderators.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL MODERATORS

a) The departmental chairperson[3] recommends the internal moderators to the Faculty Board.

b) Faculty Boards appoint the internal moderators on behalf of Senate.

c) The name(s) of internal moderator(s) appear in the module frameworks that are made available to students.

d) The name(s) of the internal moderator(s) are included in the assessment assignments (question papers, assignments, etc.) that are distributed to students.

Comment: The responsibility rests with the departmental chairpersons (or, where applicable, the module chairpersons) to ensure that these conditions of appointment are met.

9. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MODERATORS

a) The departmental chairperson[3] recommends external moderators to the Faculty Board.

b) Faculty Boards appoint external moderators on behalf of Senate.

c) No person may be an external moderator for a particular module, for longer than three consecutive years, unless he/she is a member of a panel of three or more moderators who moderate the particular module.

d) External moderators should be unattached to the University and exclude 'extraordinary appointments'.

e) External moderators are not appointed in a fixed capacity or as temporary staff on the staff establishment of the University.

Comment: The responsibility rests with the departmental chairpersons (or, where applicable, the module chairpersons) to ensure that these conditions of appointment are met.

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[3] In the case of modules that are collectively presented by more than one department (e.g. in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) the recommendations are made by the module chairpersons.

10. DOCUMENTATION SUPPLIED TO EXTERNAL MODERATORS

The following documentation is supplied to external moderators:

a) A copy of this document, SU's *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*

b) The module framework, which includes the following:
   i. Name and code of the module
   ii. Lecturer(s) presenting the module and acting as assessor(s), with his/her/their contact details
   iii. Name of the internal moderator
   iv. Aim, rationale and outcomes of the module
   v. Study resources (e.g. textbooks, articles, internet material and hand-outs)
   vi. Learning opportunities created by the lecturer (e.g. lectures, group work, excursions and guidelines for self-study)
   vii. Specific details of the timetable, contact opportunities, target dates, etc.
   viii. Aspects relating to assessment:
      • methods of assessment
      • time and place of assessment opportunities
      • information on the turn-around time and format of feedback to students after assessment opportunities
      • calculation of class and performance marks
      • admission to tests/examinations
   ix. Any other special conditions (e.g. arrangements concerning aegrotat tests and participation in learning opportunities);

c) The assessment assignments (e.g. examination question papers, assignments)

d) A stratified sample of assessment products (e.g. answer scripts, essays)

e) Class lists which include the following:
   i. Names of candidates registered for the module
   ii. An indication whether registered candidates suspended their studies, or undertook the examinations
   iii. The class/progress marks of the candidates
   iv. The examination/performance marks of the candidates

f) Information on the previous time the module was moderated externally: the external moderator's comments following the assessment opportunity and, where applicable, information on the follow-up steps introduced since then.

11. DEALING WITH MODERATION INFORMATION AND PROCESSING RESULTS

a) The responsibility rests with the **departmental chairperson** (or, where applicable, the module chairperson) to examine the evidence before the assessor finalises the marks on the central information system, and to confirm that:
   i. Internal moderation has taken place
   ii. External moderation of the assessment process has taken place (as and where applicable) and that the reports of the external moderators are being kept on record

iii. Cognisance has been taken of any adjustments made, as well as the recommendations arising from the internal and external processes of moderation

iv. Follow-up steps have been planned, where applicable

v. The follow-up steps planned after the previous summative assessment opportunity were executed

vi. In cases where discrepant results have been received from the internal and external moderators, these were dealt with according to the faculty's resolution process (see paragraph 12, *Dealing with discrepant moderation information*).

b) The **departmental chairperson** (or, where applicable, the module chairperson) submits to the Dean a report on the moderation and results of **all** modules that are the responsibility of that department (i.e. not only the exit-level modules).

c) The **Dean** is responsible, after each examination opportunity and within one week of the marks being finalised on the central system, for the submission of a report – in the format prescribed by the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching) – in which he/she confirms that:

i. The assessment of all modules in the faculty adheres to all the prescribed procedures and regulations

ii. He/She has taken cognisance of the recommendations of the departmental chairpersons/module chairpersons

iii. Follow-up steps have been planned by the department (where applicable)

iv. Where applicable, the follow-up steps planned after the previous examination opportunity were executed.

d) The **Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching)** has standing delegated powers from the Executive Committee of Senate to approve all examination results on behalf of the University after the Deans have submitted reports and before the information for the graduation ceremonies is finalised.

e) The **Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching**) is responsible for:

i. Checking the reports of the Deans

ii. Taking cognisance of planned follow-up actions and the Dean's comments on these

iii. Taking cognisance, where applicable, of the progress of follow-up actions after previous examination opportunities

iv. Approving the results.

12. DEALING WITH DISCREPANT MODERATION INFORMATION

a) In cases where discrepant moderation information has been submitted (e.g. by internal and external moderators), the faculty concerned heads a resolution process to be conducted by an independent third party nominated by the faculty.

b) In cases where a faculty requires further clarification, the faculty refers the relevant discrepancy to the Committee for Learning and Training, for guidance on a resolution process.

13. EXCEPTIONS IN RELATION TO THE EXTENT OF MODERATION

a) Although this Regulation standardises the internal and external moderation of the assessment process for all modules across the entire University, it also acknowledges the great variety of modules that are offered in various programmes and in various formats. Some of these present substantial challenges in terms of moderation requirements, for example, instances where external moderators in a specific field of knowledge may not be readily available. To afford faculties the required flexibility in terms of implementing this Regulation, the Committee for Learning and Training may be approached for exceptions in relation to the extent of moderation, provided that:
   i.   A faculty's programme committee has considered the request and recommends the substantiated request
   ii. The faculty recommends alternative moderation measures that still need to conform to the spirit of the Regulation
   iii. Every programme that includes the relevant module is submitted for consideration to the Committee for Learning and Training;
   iv. The requirements of paragraph 4, *Point of departure for moderation*, are met
   v.   If the module serves as a keystone module for a specific programme, it still needs to be moderated in full.

14. GENERAL

a) As of 2005, internal moderation of all modules is compulsory for all teaching and learning programmes offered by the University.

b) As of 2005, external moderation of exit-level modules (as specified in this Regulation) is compulsory for all teaching and learning programmes offered by the University.

c) Faculties are free to institute additional faculty-specific regulations, provided that these comply with the general University requirements set out in this Regulation.

d) The current system of re-evaluation of examination answer scripts remains unchanged.

e) Time should be allocated in the University calendar to internal and external moderation.

f) Departments are responsible for all practical arrangements relating to the external moderation of their exit-level modules. This includes:
   i.   ensuring that security is maintained when assessment assignments (examination question papers, assignments) are presented to external moderators;[4]
   ii. ensuring that security is maintained when assessment products are being externally moderated;[5] and
   iii. ensuring that external moderators are able to meet their obligations in a cost-effective manner.

g) Departments are responsible for the costs of the external moderation of the department's exit-level modules. The University's standard tariffs for the remuneration of external moderators are determined annually by the Executive Director: Operations and Finance.

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[4] Special care must be taken concerning the security of question papers sent by e-mail.
[5] In order to avoid losing assessment products, it is recommended that, where possible, departments bring the external examiners/moderators to the SU campus on completion of the examination opportunities to perform their duties on campus, instead of having answer scripts couriered back and forth.

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Report on the external moderation of assessment assignments

To be submitted before the June examination, June re-examination; November examination, November re-examination; and January examination

Request to external moderators

a. Please verify that the assessment assignments (examination question papers, assignments, etc.) meet the required standards.
b. Please verify that the assessment assignments are aligned with the learning outcomes.
c. Please verify that the assessment assignments are appropriate to assess the learning outcomes effectively.

The assessors and departmental/module chairpersons of Stellenbosch University will consider these comments and execute appropriate follow-up steps.

1.	**Name of external moderator**	
2.	**Highest qualification of external moderator**	
3.	**Employer of external moderator**	
4.	**SU department whose assessment assignments have been externally moderated**	

5.	**I confirm that I received the following documents before the examination concerned:**	√
5.1	A copy of Stellenbosch University's *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*	
5.2	The module framework(s)	
5.3	All the assessment assignments (e.g. question papers, assignments)	
5.4	Other documents (specify):	

6.	**Names of the modules of which the assessment assignments (question papers, assignments, etc.) have been externally moderated:**	**Module number**

7.	Are you satisfied with the standard of the assessment assignments (question papers, assignments)? If not, please provide comments and make recommendations.

8.	Are you satisfied that the assessment assignments are appropriate and adequate? If not, please provide comments and make recommendations.

9.	Observations / Matters for attention / Suggestions

10.	I confirm that I have met the responsibilities of external moderators, as specified in the *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*.
Signature of the external moderator	
Date	

Comments of lecturer and/or departmental/module chairperson

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Report of external moderator

(To be submitted on completion of the June examination and June re-examination; November examination and November re-examination; and the January examination)

Request to external moderators

a. Please mark a minimum of ten of the assessment products (answer scripts, essays, etc.) in full and conduct a cursory check of a further sample of at least 20%.

b. Please focus attention on positive and negative aspects of the modules that you moderated externally so that the academic quality of the modules may be recognised and continuously improved.

c. Your comments could include the following: module content; organisation of learning opportunities (as contained in the module framework); the quality of the module framework; the extent to which the assessment assignments are aligned with the learning outcomes; methods of assessment and the appropriateness of these to the assessment of the learning outcomes; the quality of the assessment products; the administration of the assessment process (examinations, assignments, etc.); and/or any other matters you may regard as relevant.

The assessors and departmental/module chairpersons of Stellenbosch University will consider these comments, take appropriate follow-up steps, and bring these to the attention of the Dean.

1.	Name of external moderator	
2.	Highest qualification of external moderator	
3.	Employer of external moderator	
4.	SU department whose modules have been externally moderated	

5.	I confirm that I have received the following documents:	√
5.1	A copy of Stellenbosch University's *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*	
5.2	The module framework(s)	
5.3	All assessment assignments (e.g. question papers, assignments)	
5.4	A stratified sample of the assessment products (e.g. answer scripts, essays)	
5.5	Class registers (including names and marks)	
5.6	Information on the comments of external moderators during previous assessment opportunities and, where applicable, information on follow-up steps taken	
5.7	Other documents (specify):	

6.	Names of the modules externally moderated:	Module number

7.	Are you satisfied with the standard of the module? If not, please provide comments and make recommendations.

8.	Are you satisfied that the assessment standards have been maintained? If not, please provide comments and make recommendations.

9.	Observations / Matters for attention / Suggestions

10.	I confirm that I have met the responsibilities of external moderators specified in the *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*.
Signature of the external moderator	
Date	

Comments of lecturer and/or departmental/module chairperson

Comments of the Dean