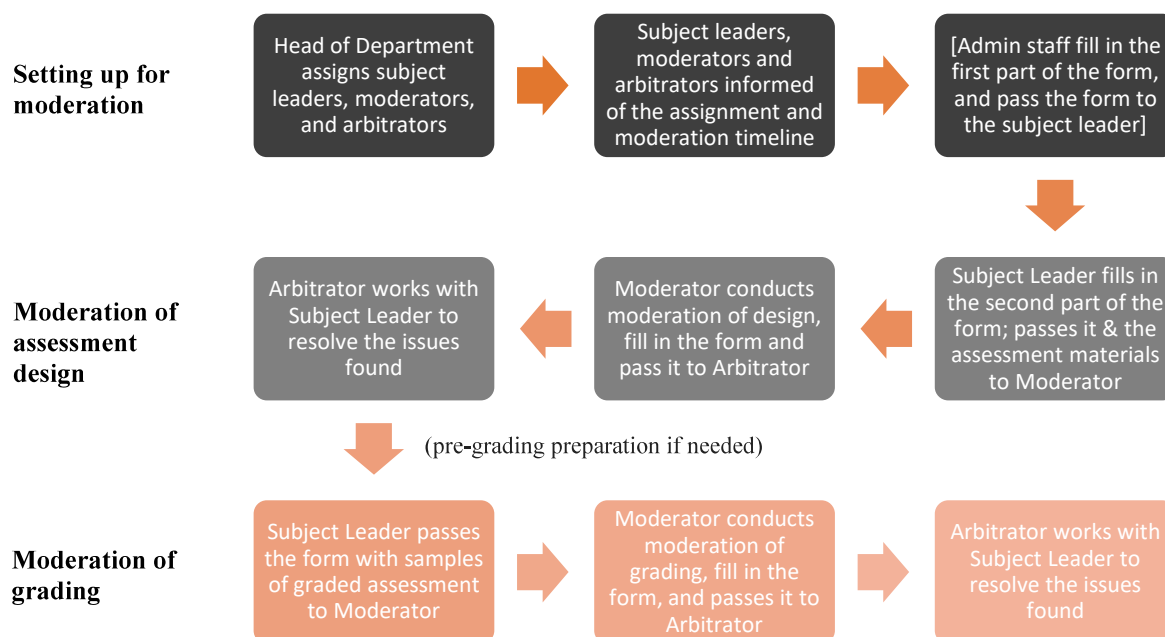


## Recommended Practices on Assessment Moderation

Moderation is the process for ensuring that the student assessments are valid, reliable and meet appropriate standards. Moderation of assessment relies on academic peer review and the professional judgement of the teachers involved in the teaching of programmes. A good moderation process benefits students by ensuring that the assessments are properly designed and graded to give them a fair chance to demonstrate their learning. It helps teachers rationalise their assessment decisions and adjust their grading practice to improve validity and reliability. It gives other stakeholders (e.g. students, employers, government agencies, professional bodies, the higher education sector) confidence in our assessment process and grade integrity, which provide the basis for academic awards and qualifications, credit transfer decisions, and programme accreditation.

Within the parameters set out in the *Handbook on Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes* (HAR), Section 9 and Appendix IV to C1, departments can make their own arrangement to facilitate the moderation process. Procedurally, a moderation process may look like this:



The moderation process should be documented using the standard Moderation Form provided in HAR Appendix IV to C1. Two hypothetical examples of the completed form can be found at the end of this document.

The table below tries to answer some of the frequently asked questions about assessment moderation. The recommended practices therein are intended to complement the moderation requirements and provide support to academic units and staff members by addressing their primary concerns regarding the implementation of assessment moderation. The recommended practices are non-binding. Departments can develop their own procedures to meet the requirements.

Reference*	Recommended Practices
Section 9.2, C1, HAR*	<p><b>How to moderate assessment design if it is difficult to find colleagues with the same level of expertise and/or background?</b></p> <p>It is often not necessary to be an expert on the exact topic to be a moderator. The objective of moderation is simply to confirm the clarity of the assessment task and the appropriateness of the assessment method and the level of difficulty. See the recommended practices for Clause 1.2* on p. 2 for more ideas.</p> <p>If necessary, departments can engage external examiners with relevant backgrounds to moderate assessment design.</p>
1.1	<p><b>What is considered a “substantially revised” summative assessment that requires moderation?</b></p> <p>Generally speaking, an assessment is substantially revised if any of the following has changed: the learning outcome being assessed, the assessment criteria and standards (level of difficulty), the assessment method. Examples of substantial revisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revising the requirement of a coding assignment by including more complex programming tasks and algorithms.</li> <li>• Changing the assessment format from multiple-choice questions to open-ended problem-solving questions that require students to explain their reasoning and apply different mathematical concepts.</li> <li>• Revising the assessment rubrics for a case study assignment to include the analysis of an ethical dilemma as a new requirement.</li> </ul> <p>Changes that do not impact the overall assessment design such as rearranging the question sequence, minor rephrasing of questions, adjusting the presentation or formatting of assessment tasks, and updating the sources or references used in the assessments are normally not considered “substantial revisions”.</p> <p>Deciding what constitute a substantial revision is often a professional judgement. It is advisable for teachers to exchange views on this matter in order to develop a shared understanding within the department.</p>
1.2	<p><b>How to determine if the task requirements and instructions are clear to students?</b></p> <p>Read the assignment brief for clarity, comprehensibility and appropriateness of the language used. Task requirements and instructions should be understandable and unambiguous to an average student.</p>

\* Please refer to the relevant clause about moderation of assessment in Appendix IV to Section C1 in the *Handbook on Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes (HAR)*.

Reference*	Recommended Practices
	<p data-bbox="347 259 1383 331"><b>How to determine whether the assessment task is at an appropriate standard/level, i.e. it presents an appropriate level of challenge to students?</b></p> <p data-bbox="347 371 1383 584">Look at the assessment and ask yourself whether it is suitable for students at that subject level (e.g. bachelor/master/doctoral level). This becomes straightforward when you are familiar with the level of competence expectable from students at different levels of study. You can develop such familiarity with competence levels by consulting reputable external references such as the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF)’s Generic Level Descriptors (GLD).</p> <p data-bbox="347 645 1383 716"><b>How to determine whether the rubric is appropriate with clear criteria and standards, and in alignment with the assessment items?</b></p> <p data-bbox="347 757 1383 969">A rubric is a tool for communicating the assessment criteria and standards. The appropriateness of standards can be established through external benchmarking (e.g. HKQF’s GLD). A rubric is clear when it differentiates performances at different levels in a way that is understandable by students. It aligns with the assessment when it makes intuitive sense in the context of tasks and the learning outcomes being assessed.</p>
2.1	<p data-bbox="347 1028 1383 1133"><b>How can pre-marking/grading preparation be conducted for subjects that involve visiting lecturers or when it is unfeasible to have multiple assessors participate simultaneously in the same setting?</b></p> <p data-bbox="347 1173 1383 1424">Pre-marking/grading preparation may or may not take the form of a meeting. It is, however, advisable to have the rubrics and a few samples of marked student work at different grades ready which the assessors can refer to in order to check their understanding of the grading criteria and standards. An extension of this is to have all assessors work on the same samples to see if would arrive at the same grades. This can be done asynchronously via email or other means, and follow up through informal channels (e.g. phone conversations) if necessary to reach consensus.</p>
3.1	<p data-bbox="347 1487 1383 1559"><b>Which assessment should undergo moderation of grading if they have the same and heaviest weighting?</b></p> <p data-bbox="347 1599 459 1626">Do both.</p>

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\* Please refer to the relevant clause about moderation of assessment in Appendix IV to Section C1 in the *Handbook on Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes (HAR)*.

Reference*	Recommended Practices
3.2	<p><b>How many work samples are required to be moderated?</b></p> <p>The policy does not stipulate a minimum, but advises that the samples should be chosen from across the grade range (e.g. high, middle, low). The goal is to determine whether there is any inconsistency in applying the rubric. If the subject has a single assessor, you may just need to look at a handful of samples from across the grade range. If it involves multiple assessors, you may want to look at samples from across the assessors to confirm that there is consistency among their grading.</p>
3.4	<p><b>How can discrepancies between the grades and the rubrics be resolved?</b></p> <p>It depends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the marking consistently deviates higher or lower from the marking scheme/rubrics, adjustment to the marks should be made, as it indicates a systematic error that can be addressed by scaling the marks up/down accordingly.</li> <li>• If the marking is inconsistent in reference to the marking scheme/rubrics, then double marking or re-marking is necessary, as it indicates a non-systematic or random error that cannot be addressed solely by adjusting the marks.</li> </ul> <p>In the event that the moderator/subject leader and assessor disagree, an arbitrator can be engaged to settle the disagreement (Clause 4.2*).</p>

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\* Please refer to the relevant clause about moderation of assessment in Appendix IV to Section C1 in the *Handbook on Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes (HAR)*.

**Attachment**

**Moderation Form (Example 1)**

<b>Subject code:</b>	XYZ123			
<b>Offering (semester, year):</b>	Semester 2, 2021/22			
<b>Subject leader:</b>	Dr Peter Chan (XYZ)			
<b>Pre-grading preparation:</b>	Not required – grading is done by a single assessor.			
<b>Moderator:</b>	Dr John Lee (External Examiner)			
<b>Follow-up/decision:</b>	Dr Mary Cheung (Programme Leader)			
Assessment component	Weight (%)	New/Substantially revised	Moderation of design	Moderation of grading
Examination	40%	Yes	Resolved	No issue
Group project	30%	No	X	X
Lab report	30%	No	X	X
<b>Issue(s) found and revision(s) made (if any)</b> Complete this section if adjustments to the assessment tasks/rubrics/grades were made as a result of the moderation.				
Issues found		Resolution		Confirmed by
One of the exam questions was unclear.		The question has been rephrased.		Mary Cheung

**Moderation Form (Example 2)**

<b>Subject code:</b>	XYZ456			
<b>Offering (semester, year):</b>	Semester 2, 2021/22			
<b>Subject leader:</b>	Dr Susan Wong (XYZ)			
<b>Pre-grading preparation:</b>	Assessors were prepared by means of a pre-grading meeting.			
<b>Moderator:</b>	Dr Jenny Ho (XYZ)			
<b>Follow-up/decision:</b>	Dr David Lam (Associate Head)			
Assessment component	Weight (%)	New/Substantially revised	Moderation of design	Moderation of grading
Term paper	40%	Yes	No issue	Resolved
Group project	30%	No	X	X
Lab report	30%	No	X	X
<b>Issue(s) found and revision(s) made (if any)</b> Complete this section if adjustments to the assessment tasks/rubrics/grades were made as a result of the moderation.				
Issues found		Resolution		Confirmed by
One of the assessors used an old rubric to mark the term papers		The term papers have been re-marked using the agreed rubric		David Lam