# POSTGRADUATE PROTOCOLS

## Moderation

## Summary

For research that is less than 90 points, the supervisor may be appointed as one of the examiners. In these instances, a moderator is required in order to ensure fair and consistent assessment.

## Purpose

This protocol will be used when a student's supervisor is appointed as one of the examiners where the research is less than 90 points.

The main purpose of moderation is to ensure that the student's work has been marked fairly and that the grade awarded is appropriate along with:

- ensuring consistency of interpretation of standards in relation to the assessment criteria
- ensuring consistency of marking across assessment of student work in the research component
- checking consistency using a pre-approved moderation process.

## Scope

Where a supervisor is appointed as an examiner for a research component that is less than 90 points, an independent moderator is appointed for that cohort of students' research component. This protocol is not applicable for any research component above 60 points.

## Application

Where a student has more than one supervisor, only one may act as an examiner.

**Moderation** - means regulating the marking of individual markers to achieve consistency in the application of unit objectives, performance standards and marking criteria (Dunn, L, Morgan, C, et al., The Student Assessment Handbook: New Directions in Traditional and OnLine Assessment (2004) Routledge Falmer, London, 259.);

Moderation can occur:
- prior to approval of grades
- after approval of grades

### Moderation Process
*Common process for moderation prior to and after approval of grades*
It is recommended that the postgraduate moderation plan is to be submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty committee at the beginning of the academic year.

1) Examiners (including the supervisor) are appointed using the standard processes;

2) Each examiner assesses the research component independently;

3) The Associate Dean (Postgraduate) (ADP), in consultation with the discipline area, will nominate the moderator prior to examination who is then approved by the appropriate FPBOS.

4) The ADP will discuss with the potential moderator the requirements of independent moderation and once confirmed, will submit moderator details (as above) for approval by the Postgraduate Board of Studies.

5) The moderator:

- needs to have the appropriate subject/discipline knowledge. Have sufficient prior experience of examining an independent research component at postgraduate level
- will have a minimum of a master's degree (in an appropriate field)
- (external) will need to provide qualifications, a brief curriculum vitae and address details along with time frame for availability.

6) Once approved by the FPBOS, the moderator is notified of the date and, as appropriate, the location, for the moderation.

7) The Secretary of the Faculty Postgraduate Examination Board (FPEB) will send the moderator:

- a copy of the paper descriptor/booklet for the research component.
- a copy of the assessment criteria and any other relevant material.
- a copy of each student's work and examiner's reports.
- a template for recording their comments in relation to each student's work

## Process for moderation **before** grades are approved

Steps in this process are:

1) The moderators will evaluate the congruence between the assessment requirements and the grades awarded, evident through the quality of the students' performance and the knowledge and skills required;

2) The moderator should:
   a. Recommend an outcome to the Examination Board or;
   b. Recommend that a third examiner be appointed

3) On receipt of the moderator's report the BOS Secretary will forward a copy to the Examiner (supervisor), ADP and Faculty Postgraduate Examination Board for consideration at their next meeting, along with the feedback from the examiner, the individual student's recommended grades and examiners reports for approval.

## Process for moderation **after** grades are approved

Steps in this process are:

1) Examiner reports are received by the Graduate Research School (GRS) and forwarded to the faculty as normal;

2) The faculty Examination Board (or equivalent) assesses the reports;

3) If the reports support a final recommendation, this is made in the usual way; If not, a third examiner is recommended to be appointed;

4) Once the cohort of research component students within the particular programme has been examined, a moderator is appointed through the Faculty Postgraduate Board;

5) The moderator will be asked to review the examiners reports to:

- ensure standards have been applied consistently; and,
- determine what patterns may (or may not) exist between the marking of the supervisor and the other examiner in each case;

6) Moderators' reports will be included in the faculty report to the University Postgraduate Research Board by the faculty committee.

# Outcome

Research components of less than 90 points and have a supervisor appointed as an examiner will have moderation in order to ensure fair and consistent assessment.

# Review

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May 2015

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V1.2     August 2019
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## Review Date

 June 2023

# Effective Date

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