

POLICY FOR MODERATION OF AWARDS AND COURSE UNITS (DISCIPLINES)

1. DISCIPLINES

Education in the Sydney College of Divinity (the College) is organized within four disciplines:

- Biblical Studies (*including Old Testament, New Testament, Hebrew, Greek*)
- Theology (*including Theology, Theological Ethics, Latin*)
- Humanities in the Christian Tradition (*including Christian philosophical tradition, Christian history, Christian spiritual traditions, Studies of religion*)
- Christian Practice (*including Liturgical studies, Missiology, Counselling, Pastoral theology [pastoral ministry, church law, pastoral care, religious education, ministry skills, ministry contexts]*)

In each discipline, teaching and scholarly work are coordinated across Member Institutions (MIs) by a Discipline Coordinator.

2. PURPOSE OF MODERATION

The purpose of moderation is to assist the Academic Board and Member Institutions to ensure that:

- a. student learning is maximized
- b. academic standards within each discipline appropriate to the Sydney College of Divinity as a degree granting institution in the Australian Higher Education system are maintained
- c. those standards are uniform across the various Member Institutions.

The work of the Moderation Panels will also help to prepare the Sydney College of Divinity for the 5-yearly Higher Education Directorate reaccreditation process.

3. TYPES OF MODERATION

- a. **Member Institution Moderation:** In the DET five-year reaccreditation cycle, each Member Institution will undergo one full moderation in the manner set out in Policy and Procedures Manual (Academic Program Regulations: Policy for Moderation of Member Institutions).
- b. **Discipline Moderation:** Each year one discipline/field of study in the College as a whole and in each Member Institution will undergo moderation in the manner set out below.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODERATION OF MEMBER INSTITUTIONS AND MODERATION OF DISCIPLINE AREAS

- a. **Member Institution Moderation:** The Moderation of Member Institutions covers all aspects of the academic operations within a Member Institution, including the Disciplines. Accordingly, its brief is much wider than that of Discipline Moderation, and includes course units, assessment, teaching and learning, library, student support services, and the academic governance within the Member Institution. Where appropriate, the

Discipline Moderation reports are made available to the Moderators of Member Institutions and vice versa.

b. **Discipline Moderation:** In addition to regular and on-going moderation by the Discipline Coordinators, each Discipline undergoes moderation by External Moderators once every five years. The moderation process is under the jurisdiction of the Discipline Coordinators and Academic Board. Procedures for that moderation are found in the Policy and Procedures Manual (Academic Program Regulations) and include this policy and two forms headed “Discipline Moderation Areas, Indicators and Assessments”.

5. THE MODERATORS

The Academic Board will appoint two or more moderators for each discipline moderation. The complexity of the discipline being moderated will determine the size of the Moderation Panel. The Dean may choose to serve as a moderator.

Other than the Dean, all Moderators will

- be external to the Sydney College of Divinity and to the Member Institutions
- have the knowledge and academic experience to conduct such institutional moderations.
- not be directly associated with the Member Institution undergoing moderation.

Each Moderator will receive

- reimbursement of actual and reasonable costs of transport, food and accommodation during moderation visits
- an honorarium of \$500 for each moderation (except the Dean).
- a copy of this policy (Policy for moderation of awards and course units (disciplines)) and the procedures document entitled ‘Procedures for Moderation of Disciplines’..
- a copy of the pertinent section of the SCD curriculum (accredited course unit outlines). Copies will also be supplied to the Discipline Coordinator in each case.

6. MODERATION PROCEDURES

Notice of moderation

The Academic Board will prepare and publish the schedule of discipline moderations to take place within the set period (normally one discipline will be moderated each year)

At the beginning of each year, the Dean will write to the Discipline Coordinator of the discipline scheduled for moderation during the year and advising what items should be made available to the moderators. At a later date, the Dean will write again to the Discipline Coordinator, giving not less than three months’ notice of the date of moderation. The meeting with the Moderation Panel will normally be before late November.

Moderation documents

For each Discipline Moderation, the Discipline Coordinator will compile a preliminary moderation document and send it to the moderators at least three weeks before of the date of moderation.

The preliminary moderation document will include

- i. Discipline Moderation policy and flowchart
- ii. Overview of the structure of each degree with a link to the SCD website for the full details of course structure and course unit outlines.
- iii. Copy of the Assembling Moderation Materials guidelines
- iv. Copy of Monitoring Assessment Results – Procedures
- v. a sample of 10 copies of the course unit handout and major assignment chosen from across the BTh, MA, and MTh levels so that, following the advance information, moderators are oriented to the task that lies ahead on the day of moderation.

On the day of moderation the Discipline Coordinator will provide the panel with

- i. a list of the undergraduate and graduate course units in the discipline that have been taught or are being taught at all MIs during the year in which the moderation takes place.
- ii. a list of the graduate-level research projects and their outcomes that have been completed in the discipline by students in all MIs in the twelve months before the date of moderation.
- iii. a description of the library facilities and holdings that are available at each MI which offers teaching in the discipline.
- iv. Samples of student work, with grades and markers' comments shown, from every undergraduate or graduate unit taught in the discipline in all MIs during the year within which the moderation takes place. The samples should represent a full spread of grades.
- v. Samples of examination questions and student answers, with grades and markers' comments shown, from every undergraduate or graduate unit taught in the discipline in all MIs during the year within which the moderation takes place. The samples should represent a full spread of grades.
- vi. Lists from each MI with names or ID numbers of students plus marks and grades awarded from every undergraduate or graduate unit taught in the discipline during the semester previous to the date of moderation.
- vii. Detailed course unit handouts as prepared by lecturers for students in each undergraduate or graduate course unit taught in the discipline in each MI during the year in which the moderation takes place. The content of these outlines should encompass (but is not necessarily limited to)
 - a. assessment details for the unit,
 - b. student bibliographies,
 - c. any other course requirements,
 - d. any supplementary details and directives given to students.
- viii. A summary for each MI of total unit offerings in the discipline, including units not offered in the year in which the moderation takes place.

- ix. A list (with qualifications and brief cvs) of staff accredited by the College to teach in the discipline.

The moderators' task

The moderators will read the moderation document and its annexes in advance of the moderation meeting. They will consider the matters mentioned in 'Discipline Moderation Areas, Indicators and Assessments' that include:

- i. *Curriculum*
 - a. Does (whichever) MI offer adequate coverage of the discipline (especially a discipline in which an MI offers a major or a graduate qualification)?
 - b. Do the units offered allow for sequential development of skills and knowledge?
 - c. Do offerings display a bias which might undermine the attainment of desirable outcomes?
- ii. *Units*
 - a. Are the unit outlines that are given to students appropriate in each case to their level and to the kind of award of which they form part?
 - b. Are assessment tasks of an appropriate standard, and degree of difficulty?
 - c. Does the assessment test whether the unit's objectives have been met?
 - d. Are bibliographies appropriate and up-to-date?
 - e. Are there significant variations in the standard of units, within or between MIs?
- iii. *Student work*
 - a. Is student work being graded fairly, appropriately to levels, and consistently as between MIs?
 - b. Are students achieving the outcomes the College would wish in the discipline as a whole?
 - c. Are completion rates and spread of grades satisfactory?
- iv. *Staffing*
 - a. How well staffed is the College, and how well staffed are MIs, in the discipline?
 - b. Do staff meet the N+1 criterion?
 - c. Does it appear that robust standards for accreditation have been met in the discipline?
- v. *Library reports*

Are library facilities and holdings adequate in each MI where the discipline is offered?
- vi. *Research*

Are students in 600 and 700 level units in the discipline being taught by research-active staff?

7. THE MODERATION MEETING

On the date set for moderation, a meeting will be held at the College (or elsewhere, if those involved agree). The following shall be present:

- i. The moderators
- ii. The Discipline Coordinator

At the meeting, points of interest or concern arising from the moderation document and its annexes shall be discussed. The moderators shall indicate to the Discipline Coordinator what matters they may be minded to mention in 'Discipline Moderation Areas, Indicators and Assessments', and elsewhere in their report, and the Discipline Coordinator may comment as he or she thinks right. At their discretion, the moderators may spend a portion of the meeting discussing between themselves without the presence of the Discipline Coordinator.

8. REPORTING

- i. Within six weeks of the moderation meeting, the moderators shall report to the Academic Standards Committee. The report
 - a. will be based on 'Discipline Moderation Areas, Indicators and Assessments'
 - b. may include with further commentary and recommendations as necessary
 - c. may include comment on any and all aspects of the moderation, especially areas of concern within particular MIs.
- ii. The Academic Standards Committee will make the report available to the Discipline Coordinator and to the MIs for comment before it is presented to Academic Board. Such comment should be given within one month, in the form of a letter. The report together with the discipline coordinator's comments will be forwarded by ASC to Academic Board for consideration; ASC may if it wishes add commentary to advise Academic Board of its views.
- iii. At its discretion, the Academic Board may request the Discipline Coordinator to report within six months on how s/he is addressing the concerns raised in the Moderators' report.

DISCIPLINE MODERATION AREAS, INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS

Form 1: Moderators' Summary of the SCD as a Whole

Area	Indicators		
	A. Teaching and Learning	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	Comment on any exceptions
Curriculum	1. Units taught in relevant period have been fully and accurately reported by all MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Graduate research projects (nine credit points) undertaken in relevant period have been fully and accurately reported by all MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Samples of student work showing grades and markers' comments have been submitted by all MIs as per discipline moderation procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Marks and grades awarded in the relevant period have been reported by all MIs as per discipline moderation procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	5. A summary of total offerings in the Discipline (including those not available in the relevant period) has been supplied by all MIs as per discipline moderation procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	6. Coverage of this discipline across the SCD is adequate at undergraduate level.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	7. Coverage of this discipline across the SCD is adequate at graduate level.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	8. After allowing for different traditions and styles of work, there is relatively little variation in quality between MIs in coverage of this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	9. The appropriate distinctives of each MI are reflected in the teaching of this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	10. This discipline is taught in all parts of the SCD fairly and without bias.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Unit outlines	1. Accredited course unit outlines have been supplied by SCD office and course unit handouts have been supplied by all MIs as per discipline moderation procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Course unit handouts in all MIs appropriately reflect the accredited course unit outlines.		
	3. Unit outlines are in each case appropriate to the level and award concerned.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Assessment tasks are in each case of an appropriate standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	5. Assessment tests in each case whether the unit's objectives have been met.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	6. The assessment questions specify the thinking process expected eg "critique"; state the requirements clearly; give sufficient direction to	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	enable a well-informed student to respond in the manner expected; indicate the length of the response expected; indicate the relative weight of each question; require students to demonstrate command of background information; require higher-order thinking that is appropriate to the level of the unit.		
	7. Unit outlines demonstrate that skills and knowledge are being developed sequentially in this discipline, consistently across MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Student work	1. Student work is being graded fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Student work is being graded at a standard appropriate to its level in each case.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Marker's comments are sufficiently comprehensive and constructive, commenting on strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Student work is being graded consistently across MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	5. The monitoring reports of of the Spread of grades is satisfactory in view of the quality of work done.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	6. In the discipline as a whole and in all relevant MIs, students are achieving outcomes stated in relevant course unit outlines	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	7. Marked assignments are returned to students in a timely manner, to assist future improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

Teaching staff	1. SCD as a whole is well staffed in this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. There is relatively little variation between MIs in respect of how well staffed they are in this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Adequate documentation re accreditation of faculty in this discipline has been received.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. The N+1 criterion is consistently met in the teaching of this discipline in the SCD.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Library / Information Resources	1. Adequate reports have been received about library facilities and holdings.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Library facilities for students of this discipline are adequate in all MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Library holdings (books, journals and electronic materials) in this discipline are adequate in all MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Library holdings (books, journals and electronic materials) in this	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	discipline are suitable to support graduate study in those MIs which offer this discipline at graduate level.		
	B. Research	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Research	1. Research course units (research project or research essay) of a good standard are being offered within SCD in this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Graduate students in this discipline are in all cases taught by research-active staff as per the Register of Supervisors .	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

DISCIPLINE MODERATION AREAS, INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS

Form 2 : Moderators' Report on Individual MIs. Name of MI:

Area	Indicators		
	A. Teaching and Learning	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	Comment on any exceptions
Curriculum	1. Units taught in the relevant period have been fully and accurately reported.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Graduate research projects (nine credit points) undertaken in relevant period have been fully and accurately reported.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Samples of student work showing grades and markers' comments have been submitted as per discipline moderation procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Marks and grades awarded in the relevant period have been reported as per discipline moderation procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	5. A summary of total offerings in the Discipline (including those not available in the relevant period) has been supplied by each MI as per discipline moderation procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	6. Coverage of this discipline in this MI is adequate at the undergraduate level.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	6. Coverage of this discipline in this MI is adequate at the graduate level.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	7. The appropriate distinctives of this MI are reflected in the teaching of this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	8. This discipline is taught fairly and without bias in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Unit outlines	1. Course unit handouts have been supplied by this MI as per discipline moderation procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Course unit handouts in each case appropriately reflect the accredited course unit outline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Assessment tasks are in each case of an appropriate standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Assessment tests in each case whether the unit's objectives have been met.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	5. The assessment questions specify the thinking process expected eg "critique"; state the requirements clearly; give sufficient direction to enable a well-informed student to respond in the manner expected; indicate the length of the response expected; indicate the relative weight of each question; require students to demonstrate command of background information; require higher-order thinking that is appropriate to the level of the unit.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	6. Course unit handouts and student work demonstrate that skills and knowledge are being developed sequentially in this discipline in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Student work	1. Student work is being graded fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Student work is being graded at a standard appropriate to its level in each case.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Markers' comments are sufficiently comprehensive and constructive, commenting on strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Student work is being graded consistently as between MIs.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

	5. Spread of grades is satisfactory in view of the quality of work done.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	6. Marked assignments are returned to students in a timely manner, to assist future improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Teaching staff	1. This MI is appropriately staffed in this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Adequate documentation regarding accreditation of staff in this discipline has been received.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. The N+1 criterion is consistently met in the teaching of this discipline in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Library/ Information Resources	1. Adequate reports have been received concerning library and/or information-resource facilities and holdings.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	2. Library and/or information-resource facilities in this discipline are adequate in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	3. Library and/or information-resource holdings (books, journals and electronic materials) in this discipline are adequate in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	4. Library and/or information-resource holdings (books, journals and electronic materials) are adequate to support graduate study in this discipline in this MI.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

B. Research		SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Research	7. Research course units (research project or research essay) of a good standard are being offered within this MI in this discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	8. Graduate students in this discipline are in all cases taught by research-active staff as per the Register of Supervisors .	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

THE DISCIPLINE MODERATION PROCESS (IN BRIEF)

1. Once every five years, each Discipline will be put up for moderation by Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Notice of the year's Disciplines for moderation will be given near the beginning of the year, and later, three months' notice will be given to the Discipline Coordinator in each case of the date of moderation.
2. Suitably qualified moderators will be chosen by SCD.
3. The Discipline Coordinator, with help as needed from MIs, will compile a preliminary moderation document to be sent at least three weeks before moderation. This document will include
 - a. Discipline Moderation policy (including the two forms) and flowchart
 - b. Overview of the structure of each degree with a link to the SCD website for the full details of course structure and course unit outlines.
 - c. Copy of the Assembling Moderation Materials guidelines
 - d. Copy of Monitoring Assessment Results – Procedures
 - e. a sample of 10 copies of the course unit handout and major assignment chosen from across the BTh, MA, and MTh levels so that, following the advance information, moderators are oriented to the task that lies ahead on the day of moderation.
4. On the day of moderation the Discipline Coordinator will provide the panel with all the material from the wallets and boxes as described in the Assembling Moderation Materials guidelines. Either at the end of that day or within six weeks, the moderators will make a report to Academic Standards Committee.
5. The report will be circulated by Academic Standards Committee to Discipline Coordinator and MIs for comment.
6. The report together with comments will be forwarded by ASC to Academic Board for consideration; ASC may if it wishes add commentary to advise Academic Board of its views, including draft proposals for an action plan if required.
7. Academic Board may if it chooses formulate an action plan with reports to come six, twelve and eighteen months after the date of moderation.
8. In cases where an action plan has been agreed by Academic Board, the Discipline Coordinator will provide to the Academic Board six monthly Progress Reports indicating performance against the targets established in the action plan. These reports will be considered by Academic Board, and the Board will give the Discipline Coordinator feedback on the ongoing development of the Discipline in the College.