

Sydney College of Divinity

Policy for Moderation of Member Institutions

1. 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 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.

2. 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 Section 6 below
- 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 in the Policy and Procedures Manual (Academic Program Regulations: Policy for Moderation of Awards and Course Units (Disciplines))

3. 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.

4. MODERATION OF MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

In the DET five-year reaccreditation cycle, each Member Institution will undergo one full moderation.

The Academic Board will

- prepare and publish the schedule of institutional moderations to take place within the set period
- identify the Member Institutions to be visited by the External Moderators Panel in any given year. Normally at least two Institutions will be moderated each year
- give three (3) months' notice of the actual date of the visit.

5. THE MODERATORS

- a. A panel of four Moderators, approved by the Academic Board, will moderate each Member Institution:
 - i. Two moderators will be appointed by the Sydney College of Divinity:
 - Wherever possible one moderator will be a constant member who participates in all institutional moderations in any given year. This member will convene the panel.
 - Normally the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity (or the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee) will serve on each institutional moderation.
 - ii. Two Moderators will be nominated by the Member Institution
- b. 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.
- c. 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 the procedures document entitled 'Procedures for Moderation of Member Institutions'.

6. MODERATION PROCEDURES

Before Institutional Moderation

- a. At the commencement of each year, the Dean will
 - write to the Principals of Member Institutions to be moderated during the year
 - provide the Institutional Moderation pro forma (Policy and Procedures Manual (Academic Program Regulations: Moderation Procedures: Member Institutions)).

- b. At a later date, the Dean will
- write again to the Principals of the same Member Institutions, giving not less than three months notice of the date of the institutional moderation
 - advise the sequences and dates relating to the institutional moderation
 - advise the details of those items that need to be collected over the period and which will form part of the institutional moderation.
- c. In preparation for any moderation, issues of special concern within the Member Institution
- may be drawn to the attention of the Academic Board by Member Institutions themselves, the Academic Standards Committee, other committees of the Sydney College of Divinity, or officers of the Sydney College of Divinity.
 - receive consideration by the Dean in the establishment of the External Moderators Panel
 - may be referred directly or through the Academic Standards Committee to the External Moderators Panel by the Academic Board, with a request that the Panel give these matters particular attention. This will allow the Panel to identify priorities and will assist the Member Institution to prepare responses.
- d. Each Member Institution will
- complete the Institutional Moderation pro forma as part of a rigorous self-assessment process
 - prepare a Performance Portfolio that includes documentary evidence in support of the institution self-assessment ratings made with respect to each indicator. The Performance Portfolio should consist of course documentation (of no more than 10 pages) with any attachments deemed necessary and (where appropriate) indications of materials to be made available to panel members on the day of the visit.
 - forward the completed pro forma and the Performance Portfolio to the moderators at least 6 weeks in advance of the moderation.
- e. On the basis of evidence presented in the Performance Portfolio, the Moderation Panel:
- will tick ‘established’, ‘not established’, or ‘in process’ against each indicator in the institutional moderation pro forma
 - may comment at its discretion
 - may at their discretion, as the panel or individual moderators, hold informal discussions with staff or students of the MI, and/or visit the MI informally.
 - will return the institutional moderation pro forma as completed by the panel to the MI two weeks before moderation.

The Institutional Moderation

- a. At least one full day will be set aside for the institutional moderation at the Member Institution. A second day should be scheduled in the event that the institutional moderation may take longer than one full day.

- b. The Moderators should have direct access to all items and people specified in the Policy for Moderation of Member Institutions (this document).
- c. The Moderators will focus on items specified in the Institutional Moderation pro forma.

Reporting

- a. Within six weeks of their visit to a Member Institution, the External Moderation Panel will
 - i. prepare a written report that is
 - in accord with the criteria in the Institutional Moderation pro forma and with this policy
 - designed to advise and assist Member Institutions in their pursuit of educational excellence.
 - ii. present the report to Academic Standards Committee.
- b. The Moderators may also report on other academic matters not covered in the criteria and on any areas of concern.
- c. The Academic Standards Committee will
 - make the Moderators' report available to the Member Institution for comment
 - present the Report to Academic Board together with the Member Institution's response.
- d. At its discretion, the Academic Board may request the Member Institution to report within six months on how it is addressing the concerns raised in the Moderators' report.

Sydney College of Divinity
Institutional Moderation proforma

Area	Indicators	Assessments		Comment by moderators ¹
A. Strategy		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Strategic Plan	1. The MI's Strategic directions that relate to SCD awards are aligned with SCD's strategic plan and directions	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. The MI's strategic directions that relate to SCD awards are aligned with AQF and national protocols	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
B. Teaching and Learning		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Curriculum	1. MI course committees and designated lead personnel are appointed and functioning.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. The MI's course offerings are aligned with SCD structures and standards.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

¹ If over 250 words, use separate sheet.

	3. SCD student feedback on course units survey is used appropriately in the MI.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	4. SCD student feedback on teaching survey is used appropriately in the MI.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	5. Results of students feedback surveys are used for systematic improvements.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
Teaching Faculty	1. Staff recruitment, retention and replacement policies are in place.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. A staff professional development policy in place, including annual appraisal.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. A faculty workload policy which appropriately balances teaching, administration, scholarship and research is in place.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	4. All faculty teaching SCD awards have SCD accreditation and, where appropriate, SCD classification.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

Teaching and Learning Processes	1. SCD course syllabi are communicated to all students for each course taught.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. SCD course unit documentation for each course unit is communicated to all students for each course taught by the beginning of each semester.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. Teaching and learning environments are conducive to effective learning.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	4. Results of internal evaluations used for course and teaching improvements.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
Teaching and learning resources	1. Educational technology is systematically employed in teaching and learning processes	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. There is viable access to library holdings adequate for the level of courses being taught.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
Assessment	1. Systematic and comprehensive criteria to measure and evaluate student achievement are in place.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. Assessment items comply with SCD policy, course unit aims and outcomes.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. Students are informed of assessment and evaluation criteria in course unit outlines and in other relevant documentation.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

	4. The MI has adequate procedures for the processing of end of semester results required for SCD.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
Student Support	1. Support and advisory systems are adequate and reliable, and in accord with the SCD student welfare policy.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. Evaluations of student support activities are conducted and evaluation results are utilized to drive improvements.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

C. Research		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Research	1. SCD policies on research and scholarship are understood and followed.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. The workload of each faculty member who is on the SCD Faculty Register includes opportunities for research and/or scholarship in accordance with SCD policy.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

D. Management and Administration		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Administration	1. An administrative structure and system consistent with SCD policies and procedures is in place	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. Responsibilities and workloads of administrators are defined and reasonable.	Established Not yet In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. Administrative operations comply with SCD policies and procedures.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
Finance and Budgeting	1. Accurate and secure financial and budgetary systems are installed.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. A fair and transparent system of budget allocation is in place.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. Expenditure is systematically recorded, analysed and evaluated.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

E. Quality		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
QA Systems and Mechanisms	1. QA systems and mechanisms are in place.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. The MI complies with QA policies and procedures of the SCD.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	3. Reports on the results of QA implementation strategies are available	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

F. Moderation		Institution Self-Assessment	SCD Moderation Panel Assessment	
Performance Portfolio	1. The MI has undertaken a rigorous self-review leading up to Institutional Moderation.	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	
	2. A Performance Portfolio outlining the results of the self-review, addressing each Indicator, and providing supporting evidence has been produced	Established Not established In process	Established Not established In process	

The Institutional Moderation Process (in brief)

1. About six months before moderation the MI will begin a rigorous self-assessment process that addresses each indicator in the institutional moderation pro forma.
2. The MI will produce a Performance Portfolio that includes documentary evidence in support of the institution self-assessment ratings made with respect to each indicator.
3. The MI will present the Portfolio to SCD six weeks before the moderation.
4. Using the evidence presented in the Portfolio, the SCD panel will tick ‘established’, ‘not established’, or ‘in process’ against each indicator in the institutional moderation pro forma, and may comment at its discretion. At this stage in the procedure, the panel or individual moderators may at their discretion hold informal discussions with staff or students of the MI, and/or visit the MI informally.
5. The convenor of the Panel will provide the institutional moderation pro forma as completed by the panel to the MI two weeks before moderation.
6. On the moderation day, the MI and the moderators will discuss the Performance Portfolio and the panel’s document produced in response to it, and discuss plans for strengthening MI performance where necessary.
7. The moderators will complete a final version of the institutional moderation pro forma, including comments, and provide a written report to Academic Standards Committee within six weeks. The moderators at their discretion may report on other academic matters, not covered in the institutional moderation pro forma, and on any areas of concern.
8. The Academic Standards Committee will make the report available to the MI for comment before it is presented to Academic Board. Such comment should be given within one month, in the form of a letter signed by the Principal of the MI.
9. Academic Standards Committee will make the report and the Principal’s response available to Academic Board within one month of receiving the Principal’s response.
10. At its discretion, Academic Board may request that the MI report within six months on how it is addressing any concerns raised in the moderators’ report.