Assessment Validation and Moderation

1. PREAMBLE

Assessment validation and moderation is an integral part of assessment procedures, designed to ensure common interpretations of criteria and standards are established as they relate to student performance, contributing to reliability in assessment grades whilst acknowledging that human judgement is a significant element in the process. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Study Guides, assessment tasks and marking rubrics are valid and reliable. Internal and external moderation are critical to assure validity and reliability of assessment practices including the awarding of grades at local and accredited international campuses. The validation and moderation process is conducted on a continual basis and improvement actions are recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register.

2. DEFINITIONS

Threshold Learning Outcomes – Nationally agreed threshold learning outcomes are developed within a range of disciplines and are defined in terms of minimum discipline knowledge, discipline specific skills and professional capabilities that are expected of a graduate from a specified AQF level program.

Peer Review Portal – A central location where de-identified assessment tasks may be externally moderated by both Australian and overseas higher education institutions. Current portal location at https://peerreviewportal.com

Peer Review of Assessment – A process of assuring expected learning outcomes is informed by national and international comparators. Further information may be found at http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/986118/GUIDELINES-FOR-PEER-REVIEW-OF-ASSESSMENT.pdf

3. POLICY

Validating and moderating the relevance and consistency of Study Guides and assessment judgements is critical to ensuring the assessments meet the accredited program Learning Outcomes and nationally agreed Threshold Learning Outcomes. ICHM will validate its assessment strategies by:

- Reviewing, comparing, and evaluating the assessment procedures, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against assessment pieces, including the information provided in Learner and Lecturer guides, and
- Documenting action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment

All Study Guides must be validated by the Program Director Academic (or delegate) prior to being issued each semester*.

Where, at the Program Coordinators discretion, it is deemed that the Study Guide has met ICHM requirements for two consecutive semesters, then specific Study Guides may be exempt from systematic review. To ensure maintenance of standards, a random, risk-based assessment will occur in future semesters.

A minimum of three subjects from each year level of a program must undergo assessment moderation each year from each of ICHM's local and international campuses.

Validation and moderation methods will include:

- Validation of Study Guides
- Internal (ICHM and Partner Colleges) and external (external referencing partners) moderation of assessment tools and outcomes
- Benchmarking against evidence from other providers of subjects at the same level

Students acknowledge that by agreeing to the enrolment conditions of ICHM, that a sample of their de-identified work may be used for assessment validation and moderation purposes and may be provided to external parties for this purpose. Where any student assessment is sent externally to ICHM, the Program Director Academic will advise the receiving institution that ICHM is bound by its Privacy Policy and the assessments cannot be used for any other purpose.

4. PROCEDURE

ICHM's Assessment Validation and Moderation process consists of three main stages – planning, implementing, and reporting.

Planning
The ICHM Program Director Academic in conjunction with Program Coordinators will develop a three-year Assessment Validation and Moderation Review Plan (AVMRP) to determine subjects chosen, the type(s) of validation and moderation methods and frequency of the assessment moderation meetings. This plan may include the use of the Peer Review Portal and any other external benchmarking resources available.

The AVMRP will be published and available to all Lecturing staff at ICHM and its Partner Colleges, outlining the timing of assessment reviews and the dates of the Academic Committee (AC) meetings where results of validation and moderations are to be presented for discussion.

Implementation
ICHM's Validation and Moderation process is implemented via two main stages:

- **Pre-assessment – Validation of assessment tools**
  - Validation of Study Guides for all subjects* by the Program Coordinators. This process includes verifying the following:
    - Assessment methods and tasks ensure coverage of all subject and threshold learning outcomes
    - Graduate qualities are mapped appropriately

- Timing of assessment in accordance with Assessment Grid
- Assessment methods and tasks are consistent and gather sufficient evidence
- Assessment methods are as authentic as possible and minimise the risk of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy
- Assessment tasks have clear instructions for both the assessor and students
- Assessment methods and tasks meet the requirements of ICHM Assessment Principles
- Marking criteria and rubrics meet the subject and threshold learning outcome requirements

- Validation of all Final Examinations by a peer academic. This process includes verifying the following:
  - Validity of questions posed
  - Correct weighting applied
  - Appropriate variety of questioning techniques used
  - Content being assessed links to subject and threshold learning outcomes

Where, at the Program Coordinators discretion, it is deemed that the Study Guide has met ICHM requirements for two consecutive semesters, then specific Study Guides may be exempt from systematic review. To ensure maintenance of standards, a random, risk-based assessment will occur in future semesters.

- **Post Assessment – Moderation of assessment outcomes**
Once assessments have been marked by the respective Lecturer, three post assessment marking activities are undertaken each semester:

Review of individual assessment points
Prior to the publication of individual assessment points, Lecturers are required to provide the Program Director Academic with a de-identified graph of the spread of results for each assessment item. Where the results appear to be incongruent with prior and/ or expected trends, the Program Director Academic will consult with the individual Lecturer to review their interpretation of the marking criteria for the assessment item. If, in the opinion of the Program Director Academic, the results need further review, then the Program Director Academic will convene an Academic Committee Meeting in order to conduct a review.

Review of end of semester provisional results
Immediately following the finalisation of all provisional results for each semester, and prior to review and approval of results by the Academic Committee, the Program Director Academic (in conjunction with the Program Coordinators) will review the provisional results for all subjects. This review will:

- Assess the spread of results, comparing prior semester results, and identify any trends that appear to be incongruent with prior and/ or expected trends
- Consider feedback from the Lecturer provided in the End of Semester Course Report

Where any results appear to be incongruent with prior and/ or expected trends then a report will be prepared by the Program Director Academic and provided to the Academic Committee for its consideration. The report will contain:

- examples of assessment processes and tools used
- feedback on assessments gained through individual debriefs of Lecturers and students
- samples of graded assessments
- copies of reports from the Peer Review Portal (where applicable)

The Academic Committee will assess this report and determine if further investigation is required.

Scheduled post assessment moderation
In accordance with the AVMRP, a series of post assessment moderation activities will be undertaken on a risk-based approach to randomly verify the rigour of assessment processes undertaken during an academic year of study. These post assessment moderation activities are scheduled for ICHM and its Partner Colleges. Several scheduled activities are undertaken, and include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Moderation at the margins – Final results centred around the specific mark levels (e.g., 50%, 55%, 65% etc). A representative sample of assessments around these marks are reviewed for the appropriateness of the given mark and, therefore, the final grade.
- Multiple markers in the same subject - The distribution of the marks awarded by the various markers is assessed (and if there are multiple questions, then for each question) to ascertain if there are markers who might lie outside of the average or a general trend. **Note**, where multiple markers are utilised within a subject, the markers are required to meet on a regular basis during the semester with the purpose of calibrating and moderation assessment outcomes.
- Random sampling - An entire subject is chosen, and a sufficient number of randomly chosen assessments is selected to meet the particular confidence level.
- Use of the Peer Review Portal, to ensure external national and international comparators are obtained using the aforementioned moderation methods.

Where the Program Coordinators identify any situation where post assessment outcomes have the potential to adversely impact the grade distribution in any subject then they may request the Program Director Academic to invoke a full moderation process. Details of the moderation process are to be developed by the Program Director Academic and presented to the Academic Committee for approval.

Reporting
A summary of the assessment validation and moderation activities conducted in accordance with the AVMRP is provided in the AVMRP Report by the Program Director Academic. Improvement activities are documented in the Continuous Improvement Register along with the assigned activities to specific people or groups of people and indicates required completion dates. The AVMRP is provided to the Academic Committee, with a summary report provided by the Program Director Academic to the Academic Board.

5. REVIEW

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the review of this policy on a 3-yearly basis.

6. APPROVAL

Assessment Validation and Moderation	
Policy Owner	Program Director Academic
Version Number	5.0
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	15 March 2022
Next Review Date	March 2025

Version Control and Modification History Table		
Date	**Modification**	**Person responsible**
28/11/11	Addition of section to meet CAP conditions	Dr Ian Whyte
29/11/2012	Addition of the Changes to the Policy section approved by Academic Board meeting 29/11/12	Academic Board approval – IW edit
22/2/2018	Major revision to policy to reflect revised processes	Approved by AB 19/3/2018 Dr George Brown edit
30/11/2019	Revisions in accordance with recommendations from External Governance Review – risk manage external moderation with partners	Approved by Academic Board 10/12/2019
March 2022	Minor updates to titles and to cover all courses	Approved by Academic Board 15/03/2022