Moderate assessment

education

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Moderate assessment
A module of the Advanced Certificate: Education (School Management and Leadership)

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Advanced Certificate: Education
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Table of Contents

List of tables

List of figures

Acknowledgements

Foreword

Acronyms and abbreviations used in the programme

AC	Assessment Criteria
ACE	Advanced Certificate: Education
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CCFO	Critical cross-field outcome
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
DSG	Development Support Group
EMD	Education Management Development
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
INSET	In-service Education and Training
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBA	Outcomes-Based Assessment
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association
SDT	Staff Development Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SGB	Standards Generating Body
SMT	School Management Team
SO	Specific Outcome
US	Unit Standard

Overview

Word of welcome

Welcome to every student who has registered for this module on *Moderation of Assessment.* We trust that this module will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to moderate assessments and to manage moderation processes at your school. We wish you every success in completing the module.

Quality education

Gone are the days when educators were respected and even admired just because they were 'educated'. Nowadays educators have to earn people's respect and they are held accountable for the way they teach, assess, and manage institutions and people. The spirit of the time is one in which every teacher has to prove her/his worth and has to submit her/himself and the institution where s/he works to various quality control measures and processes.

Quality control is a process aimed at determining or evaluating the quality of standards, services, products, relationships, etc. The flip side of quality control is q*uality assurance*, a process aimed at establishing and maintaining structures and procedures that will result in quality standards, products and processes. One could, therefore, say that quality control, which happens after an event, is a *reactive* process - while quality assurance, which is the result of forward planning, is *proactive* in nature. Quality assurance is concerned with *consistency*, i.e. its purpose is to ensure that the quality of whatever is happening – teaching, learning, assessment – remains constant. Ironically, the only way in which this can be ensured is by conducting regular – or even continuous – quality control checks, such as self-evaluation exercises, reviews (internal or external) and/or audits (usually external). Crucial to these processes is the ability to critically reflect on what has taken place and to constructively respond to any flaws, weaknesses or limitations identified during the evaluation process.

Every educator has, at some time or other, critically reflected on her/his performance and/or the performance of the learners in her/his care. Most educators have also had the experience of having to submit their lesson planning, test papers and/or the scripts they have marked to someone else to be 'checked'.

It is this 'checking' process that is the focus of this module and, because all of you have already had some experience of these processes, much of the work done in this module might be familiar to you. The purpose of this module is not simply to repeat what you have already learnt experientially. Rather, it is aimed at stimulating you to think critically about your own and others' checking/moderation practices and to apply whatever new insights you gain from such reflections, to your own practice and/or context.

Module focus

The focus of this module is not only on moderation but also on the management of moderation processes at subject, department and school level. The current emphasis on moderation is the result of an increased emphasis on accountability

and quality assurance in education. Informing this emphasis is the desire to ensure that assessments are fair, reliable, valid and consistent.

As you know, South Africa has opted for an outcomes-based education and training system. In such a system, where the emphasis is on the demonstration of competence rather than on discrete knowledge or skills, reliable assessments are of crucial importance. In the past, the various departments of education accepted responsibility for ensuring that assessments were reliable, valid and fair, with the results of the external Grade 12 examination being the prime indicators of quality teaching and learning. Just watch the newspapers each year when the Grade 12 results are published. Every one of them has something to say about the drop in subject averages or the percentage of learners who fail and/or get distinctions. Although this type of verification is still important in an outcomes-based system, it is not the only form of verification any more. Every teacher, every subject head, every head of department and every school principal also has to accept responsibility for ensuring that school assessments are rigorous – i.e. of a sufficiently high standard – yet fair, and that the teaching and learning that precedes assessments provide learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to demonstrate the competence required in culminating assessments. Because of this it is important that all educators, but especially educational managers, acquire the knowledge and/or expertise required to establish and maintain systems and processes that reflect best practice. Moderation is one such process, and this module is aimed at assisting current and aspiring educational leaders and managers to develop the requisite expertise in this area.

Based on the assumption that everyone who is registered for this module is an educator and that all of you are aspiring to be educational leaders and managers some day, the learning content has been carefully selected to reflect educational situations where a critical understanding of quality assurance, standards and moderation is crucial.

Consequently, the activities and assignments in this module will require you to apply everything you learn in establishing and maintaining moderation systems and processes to your own school.

Module outcomes

By the end of this module you should be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of moderation within the context of an outcomes-based assessment system, particularly as it relates to schools
- The ability to plan and prepare for moderation
- The ability to conduct moderation and to manage moderation processes and procedures
- The ability to record and report moderation results in ways that support and develop educators' ability to plan and conduct quality assessments
- The ability to manage moderation at various institutional levels in ways that are aligned with the policies of the department of education
- The ability to conduct reviews of own and others' moderation systems and processes.

The structure of the module

This module consists of 3 units, each with its own outcomes, assessment tasks and assessment criteria. Each of the units focuses on a specific aspect, building on from the previous unit and building forward to the next. Each unit starts with a brief introduction and includes explanatory notes on the aspect being discussed, activities related to the assessment, suggestions about further reading, and mini-research assignments.

The three units address the following three questions:

- What is moderation and what is its role in an OBE system?
- How do we moderate?
- How can we manage internal moderation?

Learning time

This module carries 10 credits. It should, therefore, take the average student approximately 100 hours to successfully complete the module. The 100 hours includes contact time, reading time, research time, time required to discuss insights with colleagues and fellow students, time to plan and conduct assessments and time to write assignments. A more specific indication of time to be spent on each of these activities will be provided in each of the units that make up this module.

Moderation and Outcomes-Based Education

unit 1

Moderation and Outcomes-Based Education

1.1 Introduction

The quality of education is continuously being assessed all over the world. Just open a newspaper and you will probably find some or other person offering his/her view about the quality – or standard – of education in our own country. Some people judge quality in terms of Grade 12 results, some by safety and security in schools, some by learner or educator behaviour, some by all of these.

Debates about quality and standards are conducted every day, everywhere and about everything: the quality of products, the quality of service, the quality of educators, the standard of living, standards for political behaviour, the standard of education, etc. Bureaucrats have written documents detailing quality assurance *processes and procedures*; academics have researched *notions of quality*, and practitioners have devised various *systems and/or strategies* to promote and maintain quality.

One of the ways in which education authorities attempt to ensure the quality of education is by the development of policies that guide teaching, learning and assessment practice. The development of curriculum frameworks, the formulation of standards for the development of resources and the regular re-training or upgrading of educators all contribute to the maintenance or improvement of quality teaching, learning and assessment.

There are various ways in which the quality of assessments could be monitored. This module deals with one of these strategies, namely *moderation*. In this unit, which forms the basis for the rest of the module, the term, 'moderation', and other key concepts used in moderation discourse are clarified. Moreover, some of the frames of reference that inform moderation processes are also briefly discussed and the relationship between quality assurance and moderation in an outcomes-based context is introduced with a view to further discussions in subsequent units.

Unit 1 outcomes and assessment criteria

At the end of this unit you should be able to demonstrate a critical understanding of moderation within the context of an outcomes-based system. In order to demonstrate your competence you will have to provide evidence that you:

- Can explain what moderation is and why it is an important element of quality assurance
- Can distinguish between internal and external moderation
- Use NCS learning outcomes and assessment standards as a basis for the design and moderation of assessment instruments

- Know and can apply assessment principles in the moderation of assessment instruments.

1.2 What is moderation?

Let's start our discussion of moderation with an activity.

activity 1a
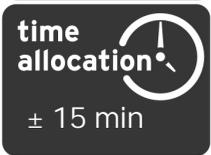
time allocation

± 15 min

Have you ever been an external marker for end-of-year Grade 12 examination papers? If you have not, find a colleague who has and ask him/her to tell you how a typical marking session proceeds. If you have, reflect for a moment on the processes or procedures followed during a typical marking session. What happens first, second, third, etc.? Do you think these steps are necessary? Why/why not? Bearing in mind your experiences or the result of your enquiries, complete the paragraph below.

Firstly, the chief _____ Once there is consensus/agreement on _____ , each examination script is marked at least _____ times to ensure that _____ If two examiners/markers have awarded very different marks to the same script the chief examiner will _____ _____

stop & think

How do classroom and school assessments differ from the process you have just described? Which of the two do you think is most likely to result in assessment that is fair and of a high quality? Why is this the case, do you think? Do you think that there is a place for moderation in primary schools? Why/why not?

our comments

We know from experience that not all teachers/markers apply the same standards when marking papers and/or judging performance: some mark very strictly, others very leniently; some, especially in essay marking, are more subjective, others more objective. Because of this variation in standards, the person who is being assessed can never be absolutely sure what s/he is really worth in terms of her/his demonstration of competence.

Let's illustrate this with a practical example.

In the text box that follows you will find a summary of a literature review on sexual harassment. Pretend that you are a university lecturer and that you have been asked to mark this review as an assignment.

Having marked it, give it a mark out of 100 but do not write the mark on the 'assignment' itself.

Now ask two of your colleagues to mark it and to give it a mark out of 100. Afterwards, have a meeting with these two colleagues. Compare your mark with theirs and discuss the reasons for differences in your marks.
What questions do these differences raise concerning consistency in the standard of marking? How could differences like these best be avoided or eliminated?

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment has many consequences. Adams, Kottke, and Padgitt (1983) found that some women students said they avoided taking a class or working with certain professors because of the risk of harassment. They also found that men and women students reacted differently. Their research was a survey of 1,000 men and women, graduate and undergraduate students. Benson and Thomson's study in *Social Problems* (1982) lists many problems created by sexual harassment. In their excellent book, *The Lecherous Professor*, Dziech and Weiner (1990) give a long list of difficulties that victims have suffered.

Researchers study the topic in different ways. Hunter and McClelland (1991) conducted a study of undergraduates at a small liberal arts college. They had a sample of 300 students and students were given multiple vignettes that varied by the reaction of the victim and the situation.

Jaschnik and Fretz (1991) showed 90 women students at a mid-eastern university a video recording depicting a classic example of sexual harassment by a teaching assistant. Before it was labeled as *sexual harassment*, few women called it that. When asked whether it was sexual harassment, 98 percent agreed.

Weber-Burdin and Rossi (1982) replicated a previous study on sexual harassment, only they used students at the University of Massachusetts. They asked 59 students to rate 40 hypothetical situations.

Reilley, Carpenter, Dull, and Bartlett (1982) conducted a study of 250 female and 150 male undergraduates at the University of California at Santa Barbara. They also had a sample of 52 faculty members. Both samples completed a questionnaire in which respondents were presented vignettes of sexually harassing situations that they were to rate.

Popovich et al. (1986) created a nine-ten scale of sexual harassment. They studied 209 undergraduates at a medium-sized university. They divided these students in groups of 15 to 25 and found disagreement and confusion among the students regarding the issue being studied.

(Adapted from Neumann, 2000: 461)

our comments

A Literature Review is a specific kind of essay that all those studying at a university are required to do at some time or other. In preparing/writing a literature review students are expected to demonstrate that they:

- *Are familiar with a specific body of knowledge*
- *Are willing to learn from other researchers*
- *Critically reflect on others' research findings*

- *Can merge various researchers' findings to substantiate an argument and/or prove a point they wish to make.*

These expectations are typically used as criteria against which students' literature reviews are assessed. Based on these criteria we are of the opinion that this is a relatively poor literature review and we would give it no more than 40 to 45%.

The writer made all the mistakes commonly made in the writing of reviews. S/he simply summarized a number of individual sources/research reports without in any way trying to link them to each other. Because her/his review reads like a set of notes strung together, it fails to communicate a sense of purpose. The right way to write a review is to organize common findings or arguments together and then to list (in brackets) all the researchers who share the same view. The only redeeming factor, as far as we are concerned, is that the reviewer has obviously used a relatively wide range of sources and has acknowledged these in the review.

The difference between the way we marked and the way you and your colleagues probably marked is that we made our judgements in terms of a specific set of criteria whereas you, acting according to our instructions, awarded a global mark. Because we used specific criteria and you did not, our marking was probably more objective than yours and our marks are likely to correlate better and/or show a greater correspondence than yours would.

> Moderation is then concerned with processes for establishing and/or maintaining common standards.

The use of criteria, like those in the bulleted list above, known as criterion-referenced assessment, is one of the means that assessors and moderators could use in their attempts to establish and/or maintain a common standard.

1.3 Criterion referencing

Criterion referencing, or criterion referenced assessment, is an individualized, learner-centred form of judgement/evaluation. In this approach each learner's performance is 'measured' against a pre-determined standard or criterion that specifies the knowledge, skills, values and/or attitudes that a learner is expected to demonstrate in a specific assessment. If the learner's performance reflects/matches the standards in the criteria that are being used for assessment s/he will be deemed *competent*, if not, s/he will have to be re-assessed, against the same criteria, at a later date.

In moving to an outcomes-based system of education and training, South Africa has, by implication adopted a criterion-referenced approach to assessment and evaluation. The National Curriculum Statements (NCS) for each learning area and grade in the General Education and Training Band (GET) and for each subject and grade/NQF level in the Further Education and Training Band (FET) contain assessment standards for each grade. These assessment standards are criteria for judging the achievement of the learning outcomes for that grade.

Study Table 1, which contains an extract from the RNCS for the Learning Area Life Orientation, to see what we mean.

TABLE 1: LIFE ORIENTATION (GRADES 7 TO 9)

LEARNING OUTCOMES 2: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		
The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions		
Assessment Standards: We know this when the learner -		
GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9
Discusses the application of human rights as stated in the SA Constitution	*Discusses* violations of human rights *and plans* counter-strategies	*Debates* issues with regard to citizens' rights and personal choices
Explains how to counter gender stereotyping	*Explains how to use* democratic processes to address a local problem	*Reports on* participation in or planning of the local celebration of a national day
Discusses the significance of volunteer organizations	*Discusses how* the learner would promote nation-building in different contexts	*Critically discusses* social relationships in a variety of situations
Explains how recognition of diverse cultures can enrich SA society	Critically *evaluates* changes in cultural norms and values in relation to personal and community issues	Critically *investigates* issues of diversity in SA and finds ways in which to promote understanding of diverse cultures
Explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world's religions	*Discusses* the contributions of various religions to social development	*Reflects on* and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace

You will notice that the *outcome* for the 3 grades is exactly the same. Because of this the outcome cannot be used to monitor progress (from Grade 7 to Grade 9) or to judge competence. In order to do this, the assessor will have to use the

assessment standards appropriate to the grade in which the concerned learner is at the time s/he is being assessed. The moderator, in 'checking' the reliability of the assessor's judgement will have to do the same.

Assessment standards represent criteria against which each learner's performance can be judged. If a learner can provide sufficient evidence that s/he can do the things specified in the assessment standards, s/he is deemed competent and will be promoted or allowed to proceed with more difficult work; if not, s/he has to relearn the work and repeat the assessment or complete an alternative assessment. If you compare the italicized words in the Table you will see that they indicate what learners in each grade have to do to convince the assessor of their competence. You will also notice that the actions expected of learners in the different grades become progressively more difficult. *Text 1* in your Reader provides an example of Bloom's taxonomy as an illustration of levels of difficulty.

You have now gone through the motions of 'unpacking' the assessment standards of one outcome for a specific Learning Area and Phase. Let's see if you can now apply this to the grade and learning area/subject you teach/ have taught.

activity
1b

time allocation

± 3 hours
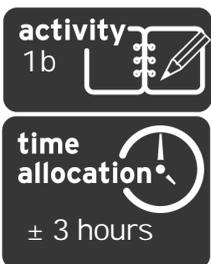
- Select an outcome and one or more assessment standards associated with it from the RNCS/NCS document for the learning area/subject you teach. (Do not use the same one we used as an example. Try a different one otherwise you won't find out whether you can apply what you have learnt.)
- Design an assessment instrument appropriate to the assessment standard you chose. If you do not know how to design instruments ask one of your colleagues to assist you or use an existing instrument that will serve your purpose.
- Discuss the assessment standards with the learners beforehand so that they will know what to focus on when they learn and/or attempt to demonstrate their competence.
- Conduct the assessment, interpret the results and decide which learners are competent and/or not yet competent.
- Enter your judgements on a mark sheet but don't tell anybody what your judgements were.
- Now provide one of your colleagues with the standards you used to judge learners' work and ask him/her to re-assess a sample (at least 5%) of the total number of assessment tasks you marked. Make sure that the sample includes some examples of excellent, average and poor performance but do not tell your colleague which are which.
- Once your colleague has made his/her judgements, sit down and discuss the results. Compare your judgements with his/hers and, if they were very different, determine why this is so. Was either of you perhaps too 'strict' or too 'lenient'? Did either of you perhaps make subjective rather than criterion-referenced judgements?
- Write down the lessons you learnt or the insights you gained from this experience in the Reflective Section of your Learning File/Folder for future reference.

our comments

When you asked your colleague to re-assess or remark your work you were in effect asking him/her to moderate your assessments. By providing him/her with the criteria you used you were asking him/her to operate in a criterion-referenced

*way. There is, however, another frame of reference – **norm-referencing** - that is often used in judging learner performance. Because this form of referencing was common in South Africa prior to the introduction of outcomes-based education you are probably quite familiar with it.*

Let's explain norm-referencing by means of an example. What do teachers typically do every time learners write a test or an examination? They add all the learners' marks together and work out the *class average*. Based on this average they then describe/classify learner performance as *excellent*, *average*, or *poor*.

What though, if the class average is very low or if all the learners in a class or school fail, as was the case in a school in North West in 2006? Does it mean that all the learners are "poor" or could there be other reasons? Perhaps the test was too difficult; perhaps the teacher does not know how to teach; perhaps the person who marked the examination papers did not do so properly!

In cases like these, statisticians fall back on norm-referencing to ensure that the standards against which learners have been assessed in this particular examination/test are the same as the standards used the previous year. The procedure they use to ensure consistency and fairness would look something like this.

Firstly, they *look* at the averages for a particular subject over the past few years to identify a 'trend'. If, for example, the average mark for this subject for the past 5 years was somewhere between 48% and 52%, they would *reason* that this is a 'normal' average – the norm – and would *adjust* the marks of the entire group upwards or downwards to get the average as close as possible to the 'norm', that is, between 48% and 52%.

Norm referencing, and its associated statistical applications, ensure that the distribution of marks is *'normal'*. In this case the primary concern is not with individual marks but with the *normal spread/distribution of **all** the marks* which, when plotted on a graph, would form an ideal 'bell curve' (see Figures 1 through 3). In the diagrams that follow, the mean is the statistical average; the median is the mid-point mark and the mode refers to the mark obtained by the greatest number of learners.

mean = median = mode
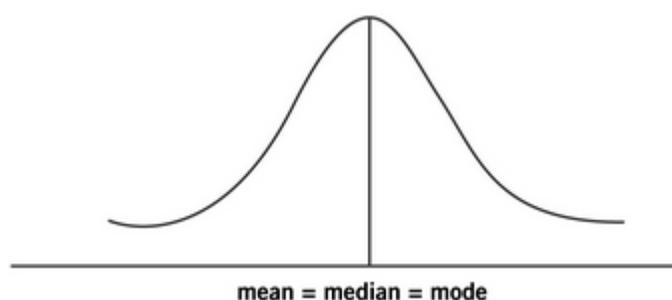
Figure 1: Normal distribution curve indicating that the level of assessment was appropriate
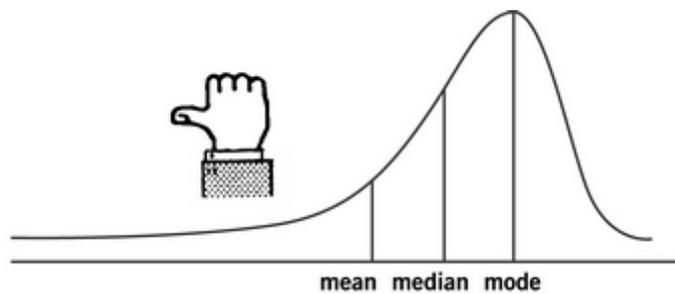
Figure 2: Right skewed bell curve indicating assessment was perhaps too easy
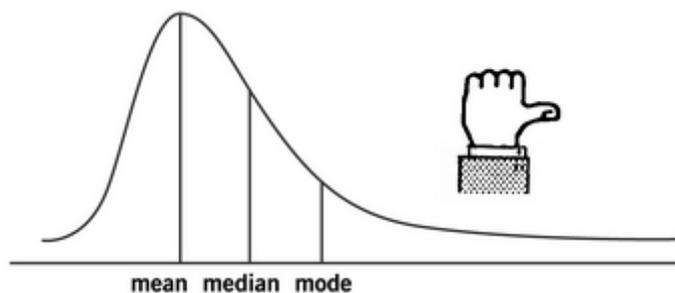
Figure 3: Left-skewed bell curve indicating assessment was perhaps too hard (Unisa 1981:71-72)

To correct a graph that leans too much to the left (assessment too difficult), the marks of those learners who performed below the norm would be raised; if the graph leant too much to the right (assessment too easy), the marks of those who performed above the norm would be lowered. The only ones whose marks would not be adjusted would be those whose marks were average – or 'normal'.

Norm-referencing is a very useful *research* tool because it facilitates group comparisons. For example, a researcher who wants to determine whether or not boys in general perform better than girls in Mathematics, would plot the results of mathematics assessment on a graph to determine the normal distribution. The angle of the bell curve would give him/her the answer that s/he is looking for.

What then is the main difference between norm-referencing and criterion-referencing? In the former – norm-referencing – the group average could have an effect on individual marks. In the latter – criterion-referencing – the individual learner's performance is at no stage influenced by any other learner's performance. It does not matter what the average is and, therefore, no marks will be adjusted unless the marker has not used the criteria as s/he should.

stop & think !
Re-read the last two paragraphs very carefully. Do you think it is fair to make use of norm-referencing to adjust marks? Why/why not? Perhaps you and your colleagues could debate this issue. Perhaps you could simply jot down your thoughts in the Reflection Section of your Learning File/Folder for later reference.

activity
1c

time
allocation
± 3 hours

Why don't you use norm-referencing as a form of action research in your own classes? Use any of the following methods, depending on what it is that you want to find out.

- Compare the averages of the different classes for the same assessment task if you want to see which class performs the best.
- Add the marks obtained by the girls and boys in the same class separately and work out separate averages for them. This would indicate which of the two genders performed best in a single assessment task.
- If you are interested in seeing whether either of these occurrences is indicative of a trend – e.g. that the same class always does better than the other one or that a particular gender group always outperforms the other – you will have to repeat this exercise at least three times. If you get the same results each time, you could infer that this is a trend and, should you be interested in the reason for the trend you would have to investigate it further.

1.4 External and internal moderation

Moderation, like norm- and criterion-referencing, is also a means of ensuring that the standards according to which learners are assessed are consistent. Remember your reflection on the Grade 12 marking at the beginning of the unit? In situations like these, the chief marker would discuss the frame of reference and the assessment criteria with all markers prior to their commencing with marking. Where markers allocate vastly different marks, the chief marker would then remark the script concerned, using the prescribed frame of reference and/or criteria to determine what the actual mark should be. By doing this s/he ensured that the standards that assessors applied in marking learners' scripts were consistent/the same throughout.

This was one example of external moderation. Another example can be found in the way decisions are made about the awarding or not of a master's or doctoral degree. In this case the study leader of the HEI where the student is enrolled for his/her degree would typically appoint three external moderators – i.e. assessors who are not associated with the HEI where the student submitted his dissertation/thesis. The external moderator/s will each assess the student's dissertation or thesis separately, using the criteria provided by the study leader. The moderators' marks, qualitative comments and/or recommendations will be written down in a formal report that s/he will submit to the study leader. The study leader will then compare the three reports submitted by the respective external moderators with the marks s/he had initially allocated to the student and, if applicable, the student's mark will be adjusted. Usually the student will also have to effect corrections to his/her dissertation or thesis as recommended by the moderators before s/he can graduate. If the external moderators' marks are radically different from the mark allocated by the internal examiner, the study leader will simply take the average of their marks as the final mark.

> **stop & think !**
>
> Which form of referencing is used in this example – criterion-referencing, norm-referencing or a combination of the two? Do you think that this process is aimed at protecting the student, the lecturer or both? Is this something that you think could or should be applied at schools? Why/why not?

In other examples of external moderation, that is the moderation of assessments other than dissertations or theses, moderators are typically supplied with a representative sample (usually 10%) of learners' scripts, portfolios or other forms of evidence and reassess them against the same standards used in the initial assessment, indicating whether or not individual marks should be adjusted. As in the former case, moderators have to hand in a written report in which they justify any changes they might have made, indicating whether or not they regard the assessor's judgements as fair, consistent, reliable, valid, etc.

Moderation could, and should, however, also take place internally, at different institutional levels. At a school this would mean that moderation could take place:

- In the *classroom*, for example with the teacher moderating the results of self- or peer- assessments

- *Per grade*, where the Head of Department (HOD) for that grade, would moderate samples of evidence assessed by those who teach learners in that grade
- *Per learning area/subject*, with the HOD for the learning area/subject sampling and reassessing evidence collected and judged by teachers teaching those learning areas/subjects.

While external moderation is primarily aimed at ensuring the consistency of summative assessments, internal moderation could also serve a formative purpose. It could indicate whether educators are inclined to mark too strictly or too leniently; it could serve to identify specific learning problems/difficulties across classes or grades, and the results of the moderation could be fed back into curriculum development, staff training or remedial action.

activity
1d

time allocation

± 2-4 hours

a) Having read and reflected on the nature and purpose of moderation, write your own definition of the concept, moderation, and file it in the Activities Section of your Learning File/Folder.

b) In our discussion of moderation we highlighted a particular assessment principle, namely *consistency.* This is, however, only one of the principles to which assessments should adhere. What are the others? Study the assessment policy for GET or go to the section on assessment in the NCS documents, read up or surf the internet to find more information about assessment and moderation and see if you can compile a list of the core principles to which all assessments - internal and external, formative and summative - should adhere.

c) Share the information you have gathered with colleagues at a staff meeting or at a workshop specially organized for this purpose. Ask someone to take minutes of the meeting and/or to write a report on the impact of the workshop and file these in your Learning File/Folder.

d) Perhaps your school would like to experiment with external peer assessment. If you would, we suggest that you approach your colleagues at a neighbouring school with the request that they partner you in the experiment. The two schools could then exchange marked exam papers at the end of the term, with educators in your school moderating their assessments and vice versa. If you decide to do this, reflect on the process afterwards, jotting down your insights, or lessons learnt in the Reflection Section of your Learning File/Folder. It might well be that an exercise like this results in the two schools collaborating in the setting and marking of exam papers, tests and/or the designing of alternative assessment instruments in future.

1.5 Conclusion

In this unit we tried to introduce you to moderation as a concept. We also described some of the strategies currently used to moderate assessments and the frames of reference within which assessment and moderation judgements might be made. From a systems perspective, however, the evidence collected during assessments may not necessarily be sufficient to make judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and/or assessment. It may well be that the results were 'contaminated' by other factors – by the way in which evidence was collected, interpreted or recorded, by assessor inefficiency or lack of expertise, et cetera.

In the next unit we shall be looking at the more practical aspects of moderation, at who the moderators should be, at when moderation should take place and at the procedures and processes that should be followed in conducting moderation at various institutional levels.

key points

- Moderation is then concerned with processes for establishing and/or maintaining common standards.
- Moderation is a process in which someone other than the person who acts as assessor reviews the instruments, processes and results against pre-specified criteria.
- The moderation of assessment instruments takes place prior to the moderation event with a view to ensuring that the instruments are valid, reliable and fair.
- Moderation of assessment processes and results takes place after the assessment event and is aimed at ensuring that no learner was disadvantaged by either.
- Culminating assessments, the results of which are used to decide whether or not a person is to be awarded a specific qualification, are typically moderated by experts not associated with the institution where assessments are conducted.
- Internal moderators are institutional subject/learning area experts who were not involved in either the design of the assessment instrument or the interpretation of the results.
- At school level, NCS learning outcomes and assessment standards serve as frames of reference for assessment and moderation.
- Assessment and moderation are guided by accepted assessment principles known to learners, assessors and moderators.

How do we moderate?

How do we moderate?

2.1 Introduction

This unit continues the discussion of moderation that started in Unit 1. However, whereas the focus of Unit 1 was on moderation as a concept, the focus in Unit 2 is on the practical aspects of moderation, i.e. what should be moderated, when and how often moderation should take place; what processes and procedures should be followed before, during and after moderation; who should accept responsibility for what in the moderation process.

This unit is, therefore aimed at empowering you, as an educator, with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to become a moderator, in your institution and elsewhere. Closely associated with this relatively specialized knowledge is an understanding of the roles that different members of the school community have to play in the moderation process. This, too, will be discussed in this unit.

Unit 2 learning outcomes and assessment criteria

At the end of this unit you should demonstrate your competence as a moderator. In order to prove your competence you will have to provide evidence that you:

- Can explain the relationship between assessment, moderation and quality education
- Can describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a person should have in order to be considered and/or used as a moderator
- Can distinguish between the roles classroom educators, subject/learning area heads and principals play in the moderation process
- Know what the moderation process entails and what documents should be made available to moderators in order for them to execute their task properly
- Know, understand and can apply sound criteria in moderating assessment instruments, processes and results
- Can design, use and evaluate rubrics used in judging the interpretation of assessment evidence
- Facilitate discussions and/or conduct workshops on assessment and moderation
- Record and report moderation results in ways that promote transparency and accountability
- Make recommendations regarding ways in which moderation results can be used to improve assessment processes, instruments and results.

2.2 Assessment and moderation

Moderation is one of a number of strategies aimed at ensuring the quality of assessment practices and procedures in educational institutions. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the assessment of individuals and/or groups during a particular assessment event is valid, reliable, fair and consistent.

We already discussed the meaning of the concept, 'moderation', in Unit 1. We indicated that moderation is a means of ensuring that the collection, analysis/interpretation, recording and reporting of assessment evidence and/or results takes place in accountable and transparent ways. We also indicated that moderation could take place internally – that is by identified staff within an institution – or externally – by objective outsiders with the requisite subject/learning area and moderation experience. Finally, we indicated that external moderation is typically aimed at ensuring the consistency of summative assessments and judgements related to student/learner progression/promotion whereas internal moderation, although also serving these purposes, could also be used for diagnostic and developmental purposes – to identify and address weaknesses in assessment and staff competence in this area.

With regard to moderation at school level we indicated that it could take place at classroom level, with the educator acting as moderator; at grade, subject or learning area level, with the Head of Department assuming the role of moderator, or at provincial/national level, with duly appointed chief markers moderating the quality of external markers.

- At classroom level the educator/s teaching a particular subject/learning area could check/moderate whether or not learners judged their own or their peers' performance fairly and objectively during self- or peer assessments. In this case the teacher would moderate the results of self- and peer assessments at the end of the period or day on which these took place and, if required, make the necessary adjustments in consultation with the learners involved.
- At subject, grade or learning area level, the subject head or Head of Department would typically moderate end-of-term and end-of-year assessment instruments, processes and results with a view to ensuring that learners in the same grade are assessed fairly and with equal rigour.

stop & think

What role do you think the school principal should play in the moderation process? Should s/he act as a moderator? Should s/he decide who the moderators are? Should s/he conduct or organise workshops to train teachers as moderators?

Think critically about these questions. Discuss them with your colleagues and/or with your principal. Surf the Internet (see what you can find by entering the key words "moderation" and "school" and "principal") or visit a library to find objective answers to this question. Jot down your views as well as the insights gained from your colleagues, your literature review and your Internet survey in your Learning File/Folder.

2.3   Who should moderate?

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) all assessors and moderators should be registered as such with the appropriate Quality Assurance Body, *Umalusi* in the case of schools. Currently, however, only a small proportion of qualified assessors and/or moderators have gone to the trouble of doing so.

Given the scarcity of registered moderators, institutions typically delegate the moderation of assessment results to Heads of Department, senior staff members and/or outside experts. Often, internal moderation is regarded as part and parcel of a senior staff member's job. External moderation on the other hand is regarded as additional work and consequently external moderators must be remunerated for services rendered. Since most schools do not have the financial capacity to do so, moderation, with the exception of the Grade 12 examination, is an internal activity.

In terms of the unit standard on which this module is based (see **Texts 2** and **3**), moderators should have a clear understanding of quality assurance, should be acquainted with moderation processes and procedures and should be able to conduct moderation in a fair, consistent and unbiased manner. More specifically, moderators should have the ability to plan for and prepare others for moderation; conduct moderation; advise and support assessors on the basis of moderation results; record and report moderation results, and review moderation systems and processes.

Could you honestly say that those staff members at your school who act as moderators satisfy these criteria? If not, do you think that the principal should create opportunities for staff members to acquire knowledge of and expertise in moderation? Why/why not?

Do you think *you* have the knowledge and/or experience to act as a moderator? Do the following activity to find out.

activity 2a

time allocation

± 15 min

Complete the checklist that follows to determine whether or not you would be eligible to act as a moderator of other people's assessments.

TABLE 2: MODERATOR'S RPL CHECKLIST

Do you know and/or understand…?	Yes	No	Explain or give examples to justify your claim
What an outcomes-based system is?			
The reasons for the adoption of an outcomes-based system in SA?			

Do you know and/or understand…?	Yes	No	Explain or give examples to justify your claim
The NQF and how it contributes to accountability and quality assurance?			
The terminology/concepts used in OBE and quality assurance discourse?			
What assessment is and what it requires the educator to do?			
What moderation is and what it requires the educator to do?			
What the difference is between assessment and moderation?			
The principles that govern assessment and moderation?			
What assessment standards and criteria are and how to use them?			
How to decide what assessment methods to use and when, e.g. observation, questioning, assignments, etc.?			
The differences in the kind of evidence that should be presented to demonstrate competence in different subjects/learning areas?			

our comments

*If you answered **yes** to all these questions, could satisfactorily complete the extreme right hand column of the table, **and** if you are convinced that you satisfy the criteria of the unit standard (see Reader, **Texts 2 and 3**), you should be able to perform the role of moderator in your school. Then you need not do this module. Instead, you should apply to an ETQA (Education and Training Quality Assurance Body) for recognition of prior learning (RPL). Should you convince this body that you are, in fact competent, you will be registered as a moderator with the ETQA concerned and you will be called upon from time to time to act as a moderator.*

If you skipped or were unsure about some of the questions, this module is definitely for you. We would like to believe that, on completion of this module, you would have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills you need to perform the role of moderator in your own subject group, learning area, department and/or school. We would suggest, however, that each time you do act as a moderator, you file the evidence of your having done so in a Portfolio of Learning, which you can then submit to the ETQA of your choice for RPL and registration purposes.

stop & think

Before we start a serious discussion on the technicalities of moderation stop for a moment and reflect on what you have learnt thus far. Then take a piece of paper and roughly jot down some of the things you would look for in a person before you select and/or appoint him/her as a moderator.

File your rough 'selection criteria' in the appropriate section of your Learning File/Folder because you will be asked to refer to them in a subsequent unit when we talk about the selection and appointment of moderators.

2.4 Collecting evidence

Assessors collect evidence of learner competence by giving learners something to do (write, dance, set up an experiment, et cetera). Moderators collect evidence of assessor competence by re-marking not only the evidence of learner performance collected by the teacher/assessor but also by reviewing the assessor's judgements on the competence or lack of competence of the learner/s concerned. To ensure that s/he will have sufficient information on the competence of the assessor and the fairness, validity and reliability of an assessment, the moderator must have access to or information on:

- The assessment instrument/s used to collect evidence of learner competence
- The processes followed in collecting and interpreting assessment evidence
- The criteria the teacher/assessor used in judging learner competence
- Examples of evidence – tests, examination papers, video recording, project, etc. – presented by learners and judged/marked by the teacher/assessor
- The processes followed in recording and reporting assessment results
- The structures and procedures available to learners should they wish to appeal against an assessor's decision/judgement.

[Note that this kind of evidence should be filed in learners' and teachers' portfolios.]

It is clear, therefore, that moderators are expected to review and/or evaluate not only the quality of the end results but also the quality of the processes and instruments that led to these. In order to comment on the fairness of assessments, moderators will have to determine whether or not there are mechanisms in place to ensure that learners do not have access to assessment instruments beforehand, that those who invigilate during written and practical assessments do not unfairly assist learners, and that nobody – learners, teachers, parents or anybody acting on their behalf - will be able to tamper with the assessment results in any way.

How would a moderator determine the assessment processes and procedures of the school?

A school assessment policy and/or an assessment plan would usually contain most of the information related to processes and procedures and, if the school has such a policy and/or plan this must be provided to the moderator concerned when s/he collects the assessment instruments, criteria and results from the teacher assessor whose work s/he is going to evaluate. The core module *Managing teaching and learning* contains an example of a school assessment policy.

What do you think the moderator's responsibility should be with respect to the school's assessment policy: checking that it is there in writing and/or whether or not the policy is actually implemented?

activity 2b

time allocation

± 60 min

Pretend that you are the school principal or a member of the School Management Team and you have been tasked to manage the moderation process at your school. Bearing in mind the kind of information moderators should have access to in order to make fair judgements prepare a checklist that assessors and moderators could use to ensure that the latter has all the information s/he needs. Use a tabular format for your checklist and include at least the information indicated in Table 3 below. To help you we have included a brief description of the headings in the table and have filled in one line as an example.

TABLE 3: EVIDENCE CHECKLIST

Aspect to be moderated	Documents required	When required	Provider	Comments
Indicate here what the focus of the moderation process is, e.g. assessment process, assessment instruments, appeals procedures, etc.	*Indicate here exactly what written information the moderator will require in terms of the aspect listed in column 1.* *If, for example, the moderator is focusing on assessment instruments, s/he will need copies of the test/exam papers, assignment instructions, etc.*	*Indicate here by when the moderator will need the documentation.*	*Indicate who (person or capacity) has to provide the moderator with the required documentation*	*Use this column to monitor the collection and return of documentation.* *Also note here any problems or successes in this regard.*
Sufficiency of assessment evidence	Grade 4 Assessment Plan	At the end of the term/year when decisions are made regarding learner progression – repeating a grade or moving to the next one *(Add the day and date if possible)*	The Grade 4 Head *(Add the name if possible)*	Assessment plans were provided timeously. Problem: The number of assessments in this grade varied with some learners being assessed every week and others only once a term.
Test papers				
Exam scripts				
Marked assignments				
Assessment plans				
Assessment records				
Etc.				

Having compiled the list, file it in the Activities Section of your *Learning File/Folder* for later use.

our comments

We wonder what you have added (or deleted) from the list we started in column 1 – classroom level assessment plans; the homework timetable perhaps. The list you make will reflect the particular context in which you work, highlighting its strengths, weaknesses, challenges, etc. There is, therefore, no right or wrong list, simply one that is context appropriate.

Carefully study our example in Table 3. Did you notice that no opinions or judgements are expressed in it: it contains information only. Specifically look at the Comments column. The moderator has inserted a comment on the number of assessment opportunities learners had in this Grade but s/he did not indicate whether the variation in numbers was negative or positive. This value judgement, with appropriate recommendations, will be included in the moderator's report only. By inserting it in the checklist, however, s/he ensures that s/he remembers it when s/he is writing the moderation report.

stop & think

What would you write in your report if, as a moderator, you discovered that not all the Grade 4 learners were assessed the same number of times? Could this have a negative impact on learners? What does this suggest about communication and cohesion amongst the Grade teachers concerned? What recommendations would you make to address the variability of assessment opportunities?

2.5 Moderating assessment instruments

Before we talk about the criteria that could be used in moderating assessment instruments, we need to be sure that we interpret the term, 'assessment instrument' in the same way.

There is *no exact definition* of the term, 'assessment instrument': various persons and/or groups seem to attach different meanings to it. Although the term generally refers to 'any technique or device that is used to collect *and* interpret assessment evidence', we shall use it only to refer *to techniques or devices used in the* **collection** *of evidence,* that is when we are talking about observation schedules, tests, assignments, portfolios, projects, etc.

A moderator who is evaluating assessment instruments will have to do so in a criterion-referenced way, i.e. s/he would have to judge whether or not the assessment instrument/s being moderated satisfy the criteria for assessment instruments in general. The most common of these criteria are: *appropriateness, fairness, validity* and *reliability.*

What does this mean?

An assessment instrument would usually be regarded as:

- *Appropriate*, if the knowledge and skills assessed were suited to the age group and the subject or learning area being assessed. Applied to the National Curriculum Statements, an appropriate assessment instrument would be one that assessed the knowledge, skills, values and/or attitudes described in the assessment standards for the grade concerned. Appropriateness also refers to the way in which questions are phrased: are the words and sentences used too difficult for learners to understand or does it take cognisance of their language level? Appropriateness could also refer to whether or not the examples chosen/context of the assessment are likely to interfere with the learners' ability to do the task - for example, setting a comprehension test about care for pets for township children who don't have any experience of pets at all. If, in the sample for whom you are setting the assessment, you have suburban children as well as township children, the comprehension test, in addition to being inappropriate for the township children, will also be unfair: it will privilege one group of learners above another.
- *Fair*, if it assesses what was taught and learnt during the year; in more or less the same way that teaching and learning took place; if it accommodates differences in and/or barriers to learning and performance (language, gender, tempo, learning style, disability, etc). Remember that although the learning outcomes and assessment standards should be the same for all learners, in terms of Spady's 'high expectations' principle (**see Text 4: Outcomes-based Assessment' in Reader**), the ways in which assessment evidence is collected could be vastly different. Fairness would, however, also refer to the number of times learners were given the opportunity of demonstrating their competence. It would, for example, not be fair to assess learners only once during the year and base decisions about their ability and/or progression on this single event. The learner might not have felt well on this day, might not

have studied the right work, might have had a fight with his/her parents the night before and this might well affect his/her performance. Each learner should, therefore, be given multiple opportunities of demonstrating what they do know and can do.

- *Valid,* if it assesses what it is supposed to assess. An assessment instrument that supposedly assesses a person's critical ability would not be valid, for example if all the questions or activities simply require the learner to regurgitate memorised information. Similarly, learners should not be penalised for spelling mistakes in a comprehension test – the test is aimed at assessing comprehension, not spelling. Spelling could, however, be penalised in an essay test: essays are written to demonstrate one's writing ability and spelling is one of the writing skills. At a more complex level, consider for example giving someone a certificate for first aid, but only assessing his/her written answers to questions – if his/her practical ability to handle the scene of an accident is not assessed, then people's lives could be in danger. A person who can answer well on paper may be scared of blood and completely unable to intervene in a medical crisis.

- *Reliable,* if what it assessed and/or if the kind of evidence collected will be the same irrespective of how many times it is used for this purpose. For example, a test aimed at determining whether or not learners can count in multiples of three should always provide evidence of this ability no matter how many times it is used. Another example would be a test aimed at testing the speed at which learners can type. The same test, applied in different contexts and to different learners should always provide evidence of learner's typing speed, irrespective of the context, learner and number of times the test is used.

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activity
2c

time allocation
± 60 min

Imagine that you have been appointed as a moderator in the Learning Area Life Orientation.
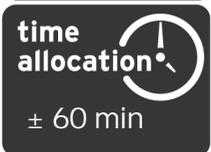
The teacher whose work you are moderating gave you a copy of the group assignment in the text box that follows.

> **Life Orientation**
> **Grade 8**
> **Group Assignment**
>
> This is a group assignment. In other words, everybody in the group is expected to do his/her part and to accept joint responsibility for the final product.
>
> *Topic:* Cultural Conflict
>
> Although South Africa is called "The Rainbow Nation', suggesting that we are all living happily together, newspapers often carry reports of cultural conflict.
>
> **Instructions**
> ▪ As a group, cut out five newspaper reports – from different newspapers – describing conflicts of culture in SA.

- Paste the reports onto a clean sheet of paper and then write one paragraph on each, summarizing the conflict it describes.

- Underline the cause/s of each conflict in each of the newspaper reports.

- Using your summaries and the causes you underlined as a basis, prepare a speech on cultural conflict in SA.

- Your speech should:

  - clarify the concept cultural conflict
  - give examples of cultural conflict in SA
  - suggest possible causes for such conflict
  - suggest ways in which conflict could be minimised/eliminated in future

- Nominate one member of your group to deliver it to the class.

You have one week to complete this assignment.

The teacher indicated to you that this assignment is intended to determine learner's social development competence as described in the learning outcome and assessment standards in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4: LIFE ORIENTATION EXEMPLAR (GRADES 7 TO 9)

LEARNING OUTCOME 2: *Social Development*		
The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions		
Assessment Standards: We know this when the learner -		
GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9
Explains how recognition of diverse cultures can enrich SA society	Critically evaluates changes in cultural norms and values in relation to personal and community issues	Critically investigates issues of diversity in SA and finds ways in which to promote understanding of diverse cultures

As the appointed moderator you have to decide whether or not the assessment instrument that the teacher is using is acceptable, i.e. the assignment, is:

- **Valid** – i.e. does it assess what it is supposed to?
- **Fair** – i.e. does it accommodate learner differences and/or barriers to learning?
- **Appropriate** – i.e. are the tasks required of the learners in line with the assessment standards for Grade 8s as set out in Table 4?
- **Outcomes-based** – i.e. it assesses integrated **competence/ability** rather than specific skills/knowledge.

Having made your decision, you are required to provide the teacher/assessor in question with a brief report in which you:

- Indicate, with reasons, why you regard the instrument as valid, fair and appropriate or not

- Suggest/recommend ways in which s/he could adjust it to satisfy the requirements of validity, fairness, and appropriateness

File your report in your Learning File/Folder for later reference and then read our comments.

stop & think !
Before a moderator can decide whether or not an assessment instrument satisfies the criteria we discussed earlier, s/he needs to know what it is that the teacher/assessor is assessing – i.e. what knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or values are learners expected to demonstrate – and what the standards are that learners must satisfy.
In the SA schooling context this would mean that the moderator would have to study the relevant NCS document and should analyze/unpack the requirements spelled out in the learning outcome/s and assessment/standards being assessed.

2.5.1 Analyzing the standards

Because the teacher/assessor indicated that she set the assignment in terms of the outcome and assessment standards in Table 4, we first unpacked these and found that:

In terms of the outcome, all Grade 7 – 9 Life Orientation learners should demonstrate:

- An understanding of **four** things: Constitutional rights, Constitutional responsibilities, diverse cultures and diverse religions, and
- A commitment to two things: Constitutional rights and responsibilities.

Understanding something is not the same as *knowing* it. When you understand something it means that the knowledge you have gained has become part of you, it has been internalized. Applied to our example, this would mean that Grade 7 – 9 learners should, therefore, convince the assessor/s that their knowledge of constitutional rights and responsibilities as well as their knowledge of diverse cultures and religions has become so much a part of who they are that they will never forget it.

The second requirement of the learning outcome was *'commitment'.* When one is *committed to* something, it means that one will 'stick with it' regardless of the consequences and/or difficulties associated with doing it. A person can, for example, show his/her commitment to truth by never telling a lie, even when the truth will get him into trouble. Commitment is not something that happens in one's *head*; it is a *heart* thing. Commitment is an *attitude:* it reflects where one stands in connection with a specific thing.

In terms of this explanation, Grade 7 – 9 learners must therefore convince the assessor that they are willing not only to insist on their and others' constitutional rights but also to accept the responsibilities associated with these, regardless of the consequences and/or difficulties associated with this commitment.

Having analyzed the requirements of the outcome, we looked at the ways in which learners in the different grades are required to demonstrate their

understanding and commitment. A careful reading of the assessment standards for each grade revealed differences in scope and complexity with:

- Grade 7 learners having to explain …
- Grade 8 learners having to critically evaluate …
- Grade 9 learners having to critically investigate and **promote** ……

stop & think !
Are you committed to exercising your constitutional rights and accepting your constitutional responsibilities? If you are, this means that you know exactly what they are, why they are important, how you should exercise them, and what will happen if you don't. Can you see that this kind of 'knowledge' is much more than mere 'knowing'? How would you go about assessing it and/or determining whether or not an assessor has done so?

How would you, as an assessor, determine whether or not a learner is committed to his/her and others' constitutional rights and responsibilities? How would you, as a moderator determine whether the assessor has adequately assessed such commitment?

Would you agree that the 'demonstration of competence' required of Grade 7 is the easiest of the three and that the demonstration of competence required from Grade 9 is the most difficult? Why/why not?

2.5.2   Analyzing the assessment instrument

A careful reading of the assessment instrument revealed that it assessed a combination of memorized and internalized knowledge/understanding, skills, values and attitudes (see Table 5).

TABLE 5: ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

KNOWLEDGE	UNDERSTANDING	SKILLS	VALUES AND/OR ATTITUDES
Learners must recognize …	*Learners must explain, in their own words ……*	*Learners must be able to …*	*Learners must show that they …*
A newspaper report when they come across it Incidents of cultural conflict as reported in newspapers	What cultural conflict is	Can follow written instructions (as provided in the assignment) Write summaries of what they have read Analyze written texts with a view to identifying causes of and solutions to cultural conflict Synthesize information into the form of a speech Do an oral presentation	Are willing and work with their peers Respect deadlines (as stipulated in the assignment)

		- on cultural conflict - to a group of peers	

(Did you notice how many of these life skills are in fact literacy skills? Why do you think this is so?)

Using this information, we evaluated the assessment instrument by comparing what it required learners to do with what the assessment standards for Grade 8 (Table 4) required. Based on this comparison we reached the following conclusions.

CRITERION 1: VALIDITY

As regards its **validity**, we believe that the tasks set will give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their investigation skills (they have to search for applicable newspaper articles and analyze them) and their understanding of cultural diversity (identifying the causes of cultural conflict), but we are not so sure about whether it adequately assesses their commitment to the creation and maintenance of harmonious cultural relations (recommending possible solutions). Merely recommending possible solutions is not really evidence of commitment. We can say that it is necessary but not sufficient. Commitment would involve demonstrating practically in a real situation of conflict – not an easy thing to do in a classroom. In the area of life skills, which involves assessment of ethical attitudes and values, validity is often difficult to achieve. We often have to "read between the lines" in assessing how learners react to and talk about case studies, role plays etc.

We should also note that a single assessment, even one that uses a variety of methods (oral presentation, written) is usually not sufficient for the demonstration of the outcomes, particularly those that relate to ethical values and behaviour.
Based on this evidence we would say that this **assessment instrument was only partially valid.**

CRITERIA 2 & 3: FAIRNESS AND APPROPRIATENESS

A comparison of the NCS assessment standards for Grade 8 Life Orientation learners (see Table 5) reveals that Grade 8 learners should be able to

> *'critically evaluate changes in cultural norms and values in relation to personal and community issues'*

This assignment, however, assesses whether or not they are able to

> *'critically investigate issues of diversity in SA and to find ways in which to promote understanding of diverse cultures'.*

This is the assessment standard for Grade 9, not Grade 8. We would, therefore, probably decide that that the assessment instrument is both

inappropriate and unfair - the task set is too difficult for Grade 8 learners; it would be more appropriate for Grade 9 learners. It therefore fails to satisfy criteria 2 and 3. It could be argued, however, that suggesting ways in which conflict could be minimized is part of critical analysis. It does not require the active promotion of understanding of diverse cultures. On this basis, the assessment could be considered fair for some Grade 8 learners. What would make it unfair/inappropriate would be if the learners haven't had practice in summarising newspaper reports, and couldn't do the task for that reason, rather than because they didn't have an understanding of cultural conflict; or if they didn't have access to different newspapers, or any newspapers at all, because they live in a rural area where newspapers don't reach.

CRITERION 4: OUTCOMES-BASED

As regards its outcomes-based nature (criterion 4), a careful reading of the assignment reveals that it is aimed at assessing not only knowledge or skills; rather it focuses on competence resulting from an integration of these (see Table 4). In the sense that the assessment instrument is aimed at assessing *competence* rather than discrete skills, and integrates life and language skills or knowledge *it is outcomes-based.*

stop & think

You would have noticed from our analysis that the assessment instrument satisfied only two of the four criteria. If you had been the moderator, what advice would you have given the teacher/assessor in terms of aligning the instrument to the assessment standards for Grade 8?

Note also that in order to judge the fairness or appropriateness of the assessment the moderator has to understand the context of the learners for whom the assessment is intended.

activity 2d

Bearing in mind everything we have discussed up to now, carefully read the section in your Reader titled **'Text 5: Assessment Instruments'**.

time allocation

± 4 hours

Having done so, workshop it with colleagues at your school and/or a neighbouring school. Ask colleagues for critical comments and/or suggestions regarding ways in which they could use this information in designing their own assessment instruments and/or moderating one another's assessment instruments prior to their being used to collect evidence.

Afterwards, write a one-page reflection on the workshop, indicating problems if any, successes and what you have learnt from the experience. File this reflection in your Learning File/Folder.

2.6 Moderating assessment processes

When we talk about assessment processes we are referring to the procedures educators follow in planning assessments, conducting assessments, interpreting assessment evidence, recording and reporting assessment results, dealing with appeals, etc. Questions the moderator would ask in this regard would typically be aimed at determining the role, sufficiency, fairness and integrity of assessment at the institution concerned.

Some of the questions moderators might ask in this regard could be:

- *Role* – What role does assessment play in monitoring learner progress? How is assessment evidence used to improve teaching and learning in your school? Do you use assessment for diagnostic purposes? If so, do you involve parents and/or other stakeholders in addressing identified problems?
- *Sufficiency* - How often do you collect evidence of learner competence?
- *Fairness* - Do learners know in advance when and how they are going to be assessed? How long in advance do they know? Does your school have an assessment timetable/schedule? Do learners have copies of these?
- *Integrity* - How do you prepare learners for assessment? Do you tell them how they will be assessed (orally, in writing, other) and what criteria you are going to use in interpreting their work? Does your school provide for learners to lodge appeals against assessment procedures and/or results? If so, how does it work?

Having read these questions you would realize that the moderation of assessment processes is trickier than moderating assessment instruments. Because the processes are not always available in writing people can lie about them, deliberately deceiving the moderator to protect the image of the institution. Of course an internal moderator's familiarity with the evidence collection and interpretation processes at his/her institution will enable him/her to describe the processes in detail but his/her ability to evaluate them *objectively* cannot be guaranteed. An external moderator, on the other hand, would be better able to evaluate the processes objectively, because s/he is an outsider, but his/her unfamiliarity with the processes might impact on the validity and reliability of his/her evaluation. The only way s/he can gather information is to ask assessors for a description or breakdown of the processes followed and/or to ask for the institution's assessment policy and assessment plan. Even then, there is no guarantee that the assessors are not covering up for themselves or their school or that what is written in the policies/plans are actually taking place.

This unit focuses on internal moderation, i.e. moderation by people who are part of the institution.

However, you also need to think about the kinds of guidelines that already exist for moderation of continuous assessment, for example. If we work in school clusters, we can set up moderation arrangements between schools in a cluster to ensure that internal assessments are verified and benchmarked against other schools in the cluster which operate in a similar context.

activity 2e

time allocation ± 30 min

Complete the checklist that follows in respect of the school/institution where you work.
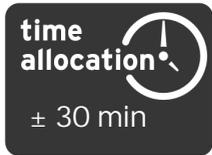
	YES	NO
Do you monitor learner progress by means of continuous assessment?		
Does assessment evidence result in changes to in teaching methods?		
Do you use special diagnostic assessment instruments?		
Do you make special provisions for those with special needs or barriers to learning and development?		
How many formal examinations do you have per year?		
Are formal assessments supplemented with class tests?		
Do you give learners assignments/projects to do?		
Does your school have an assessment policy?		
Does your school have an assessment plan?		
Are teachers provided with an annual assessment schedule?		
Are learners provided with an annual assessment timetable?		
Are parents provided with copies of assessment timetables?		
Do learners know the assessment processes and procedures?		
Do you provide learners with assessment criteria beforehand?		
Do you regularly inform parents of assessment results?		
Do you address weaknesses identified during assessments? Are learners allowed to appeal against assessment results?		
Do you give parents feedback on diagnostic assessment?		
Do you have a safe place to keep assessment instruments?		
Do you enter marks on mark sheets or something similar to these?		
Do you issue reports every term?		

We think this is a useful general checklist, but it needs to be informed by the requirements of the National Protocol on Assessment (for example, the required number of assessments per learning area per grade; and the requirements for records on assessment and ways of reporting, in addition to province-specific requirements for assessment processes.) In the case of the National Protocol, we were expecting a revised form to be promulgated during the time we were writing this module, so you will need to refer to the latest policy guidelines

available to you in updating this checklist to make it more appropriate to your needs.

stop & think

Based on the checklist you just completed, do you think that the assessment processes and procedures in you school have integrity? If not, in what sense are they inadequate and to what extent could these inadequacies affect learner performance? What do you think you could do to improve said processes and procedures?

activity 2f

time allocation

± 6 hours

PART A

Having thought about the integrity of the assessment procedures at your school, organise a meeting with teachers, learners and/or parents to determine their perspectives on assessment procedures and processes at your school.

Ask someone to keep minutes of the meeting.

PART B

Organize a workshop aimed at the development of an assessment policy and/or plan that clearly spells out the processes and procedures that should be followed to ensure the integrity of assessment events. Use the minutes of the meeting as a basis for the workshop. If you already have a policy/plan, review it in the light of the meeting.

PART C

Call another meeting with teachers, parents and/or learners where you present them with your policy/plan for comment. Take at least 30 minutes for questions, comments and points of clarification.

If necessary, adjust the policy/plan in line with decisions taken at the meeting and then start implementing it.

File all the documents generated at the meeting and the workshop as well as the assessment/plan/policy resulting from these – in your Learning File/Folder.

2.7 Moderating assessment results

When moderating assessment instruments (see earlier discussion), moderators comment on the potential of the instrument to collect the kind of evidence that it is intended to collect. When moderating assessment results – i.e. what the learners produced in terms of the instruments used – the moderator needs to shift his/her focus to the instruments that the teacher/assessor used to *interpret and/or judge* assessment evidence.

- In a *norm-referenced* evaluation system (refer to Unit 1 to refresh your memory) this would entail (a) matching the teacher's memorandum with the assessment instrument; (b) checking that marks were correctly calculated; (c) determining whether the spread of marks was normal (like a bell curve), and (d) suggesting adjustments to marks where necessary.
- In a *criterion-referenced assessment* system the moderator will have to evaluate the appropriateness and reliability of the assessor's evaluation instruments by matching the criteria used for interpretation with the criteria used in the collection of evidence. The moderators will, therefore, have to compare the memorandum or rubric used in judging learner performance with the assessment criteria provided to learners in the assessment instrument and/or prior to the assessment event.
- A *memorandum* is similar to the kind of evidence that a teacher expects a learner to demonstrate during the assessment event – i.e. the answer or answers that the teacher expects from the learner – with one difference: the memorandum contains the teacher's answers, not the learners'.
- A *rubric* is a grid used by an assessor to help them make judgements about the quality of the evidence presented by learners. The grid consists of norm-referenced descriptions (good, average, excellent) or marks/symbols (on one axis) and performance descriptions on the other. The assessor would then match the evidence presented by the learner with the performance descriptor and then match this with the relevant mark or symbol (see Figures 4 and 5 below).
- In *both systems* – norm and criterion referenced – the moderator would then have to check the way in which the teacher/assessor used his/her evaluation instrument when marking learners' work and/or judging their performance. In making a judgement the moderator has to decide whether or not the assessor's interpretations/judgements were valid, reliable, fair and consistent.

Moderators interpret these terms somewhat differently when applying them to instruments and to practice. In the case of practice, which is what we are referring to now, the terms would mean the following:

- *Validity* would refer to the credibility of the assessor's judgements and/or to the correlation between the evidence presented and the judgements based on such.
- *Reliability* would refer to the probability that the assessor would allocate the same mark to the same candidate if s/he had to mark it again at a later date or at a different time. The more objective the criteria the assessor used in making his/her judgements, the greater this probability.
- *Consistency and fairness* would be conflated in the sense that both would refer to the extent to which the assessor marked/judged the work of all learners with the same rigour/strictness and/or against the same criteria. However, *fairness* would also refer to the extent to which the assessor

refrained, for example, from penalising a learner for language usage in a non-language subject.

stop & think

Study the examples of a memorandum and a rubric that follow.
Which of the two, do you think, would be most useful to an assessor and/or a moderator? Why?

Social Science Memorandum

Question 1

a. Compass

b. Quadrant

c. Cross-staff

d. Astrolabe

Question 2

a. Compass

b. Quadrant

c. Astrolabe

d. Cross-staff

Question 3

a. The movement of the ship made accurate measurement difficult.

b. In cloudy weather one cannot see the sun or the stars.

Question 4

a. Magnetic north is not the same as true north.

b. Magnetic north moves around from year to year.

Question 5

Accept any answer that shows the learner has correctly identified the problem and has considered at least two relevant solutions.

Figure 4: Social Sciences Memorandum

TABLE 6: RUBRIC: VALUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT STANDARDS	MARK ALLOCATION				
Introduction and background	Values & human rights discussion with specific reference to education in the RSA	5	4	3	2	1
Problem statement	Description of work context with identification of VHR problem	5	4	3	2	1
Research Purpose	Description of intervention and desired outcome/s.	5	4	3	2	1
Literature Review	Summary of relevant research and policies.	5	4	3	2	1
Research design	Definition of action research, data collection, data analysis and reporting format	5	4	3	2	1
Research Findings	Intervention report	5	4	3	2	1
Conclusion	Summary of impact with reasons for success or failure	5	4	3	2	1
Recommendations	Lessons learnt and guidelines for future research	5	4	3	2	1
Reference List	Sources used, with dates of publication, publishers, titles and authors	5	4	3	2	1
Attachments	Project management plan, letters of permission, data collection instruments	5	4	3	2	1
Language Usage	Appropriate academic discourse and accuracy of language used.	5	4	3	2	1
Technical Layout	Contents page, page numbers, binding, neatness, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
Adherence to research ethics	Confidentiality, truthfulness and/or honesty, evidence of research, non-plagiarism.	5	4	3	2	1
General impression	Coherence and cohesion of report as a whole.	5	4	3	2	1

Figure 5: Values and Human Rights Rubric

activity 2g

time allocation ± 2-3 hours

Refer to *Text 6: Rubrics* in your reader and then design a rubric that could be used to decide whether or not someone is competent to act as a moderator. The aspects to be assessed have already been filled in for you. All you have to do is to distinguish between someone who is competent, someone who is not yet competent but showing progress, and someone who demonstrates no moderation knowledge and/or abilities at all. This means you will need to complete column 2, Statement of competence first, i.e. describe what it would mean to be able to be evaluated as having a competent knowledge of moderation.

Use your rubric to moderate your own and colleagues' competence as moderators.

File your rubric and the results of your evaluations in your Learning File/Folder.

Aspect	Statement of competence	No indication of competence	Not yet competent but making progress	Competent
Knowledge of moderation				
Moderation of assessment instruments				
Moderation of assessment processes and procedures				
Moderation of assessment results				
Overall impression of moderation abilities				

Figure 6: Moderator's rubric

our comments

Implied in the whole process of moderation are the notions of transparency and accountability. To ensure that the moderation process is both accountable and transparent, the moderator has to record his/her findings and recommendations in a written moderator's report. The moderator's report should, ideally, be presented to assessors at a meeting between the moderator and all the assessors concerned, one-on-one meetings between the moderator and assessors individually and, if moderation also serves a formative purpose, the meeting should be followed by means of post-moderation training.

During feedback sessions, whatever form they may take, assessors should be presented with the moderation findings, their implications for subsequent assessment processes, and the processes that were followed during evaluation. Assessors should be given the opportunity to discuss the findings and/or the processes with the moderator and, if applicable, to appeal against the outcome/s. Feedback sessions should be aimed at the establishment of a common understanding between assessors and moderators as regards outcomes, standards and processes to be followed in order to ensure quality assessment which would, in turn, promote adherence to sound assessment and moderation principles, enhance the development and maintenance of institutional quality management systems, contribute towards the further development of assessors as needed and the promotion of collaborative approaches to assessment.

2.8 Conclusion

In this unit we not only discussed the relationship between assessment, moderation and quality education but also indicated what knowledge, skills and attitudes a person should have if s/he wanted to become a moderator. We indicated that, while the school principal need not necessarily be involved in the moderation process as a moderator, s/he had to accept responsibility for the quality of the moderation process by ensuring that the structures and processes required for moderation are in place and that teachers in his/her school are given the opportunity to be trained as moderators.

We also looked at the practical aspects of moderation, i.e. at what should be moderated, when and how often moderation should take place, what processes and procedures should be followed before, during and after moderation, and who should accept responsibility for what in the moderation process.

The next unit focuses more on the management of moderation in an institution, that is, on the role of the principal and his/her school management team. Much of the discussion will, therefore, be focused on the creation and maintenance of the structures and procedures crucial to effective and efficient moderation.

Assignment 1

Approach one or two of your colleagues who teach the same grade, subject or learning area that you do and tell them that you are studying a module on moderation. Ask them whether you could moderate one of their formal assessment events for an assignment that you have to do.

If they agree, tell them that they need to provide you with a copy of the instruments they used to collect and interpret evidence of learner competence as well as a 10% representative sample of marked assessment tasks.

Having received these from them, formulate criteria that you will use to moderate the assessment instruments and assessment results respectively – your evaluation instrument.

Having designed your instrument, use it to evaluate the instrument used by your colleague/s to collect evidence of learner competence.

Now remark the sample of assessment tasks provided by your colleague in terms of the assessment instruments s/he used when doing this.

Having evaluated both the assessment instrument and the assessment results, write a report on the quality of the assessment that you moderated and submit it to your lecturer for assessment purposes.

Your report should include the following:
- A brief introduction in which you explain what moderation is and what purposes it serves

- A brief description of those aspects of assessment that you moderated (instruments, evidence, processes, etc.), with indications of the grade, subject and/or learning area concerned
- A brief description of the procedures you followed in selecting and evaluating each of these, plus a copy of your moderation instrument/s
- The strengths, weaknesses and/or inadequacies of the assessment instruments
- The strengths, weaknesses and/or inadequacies of the marking and/or interpretation of learner evidence
- A mark sheet – either one provided by the assessor, with your changes, or one compiled by you
- An indication of the extent to which the learners represented by the sample you remarked satisfied the assessment standards for the particular subject/learning area and grade
- A brief conclusion indicating your overall view of the quality of the assessment process and the standard of learning in the grade, subject and/or learning area concerned
- Recommendations on ways in which any of the things you moderated could be improved.

Managing internal moderation

unit 3

Managing internal moderation

3.1 Introduction

In Unit 1 we discussed moderation as a concept. In Unit 2 we looked at the practicalities of moderation – how, when and by whom it is conducted. In this unit the focus is on the creation of systems and procedures that will ensure the quality and integrity of assessment practices and events and, by implication, will enhance the quality of teaching and learning by default.

In discussing quality assurance and the role moderation plays in this regard, we shall first compare different opinions of and/or perspectives on 'quality', 'standards' and 'quality assurance'. Following this comparison, we shall consider different quality management models, relating them to the South African quality assurance system for education and training. Finally, we shall consider different ways in which school principals and/or school communities could create and manage their own quality assurance systems, with particular reference to the role moderation plays in this regard.

Unit 3 learning outcome and assessment criteria

At the end of this module you should be able to demonstrate the ability to plan, organize and control moderation processes in your classroom, grade, department, phase and/or institution. In order to prove your competence, you have to provide evidence that you can:

- Critically discuss quality as a concept and the SAQA quality assurance system for education and training in particular and be able to use the broad principles to inform quality assurance at school level
- Develop and manage an assessment/moderation system suited to your context and aligned with the requirements of your province and/or critically review existing system at your institution
- Plan and prepare concerned parties for moderation at various institutional levels
- Conduct and/or manage post-moderation meetings and/or workshops aimed at the improvement of assessment processes and results.

3.2 What is quality?

When you go shopping for clothes, you could either go for the 'cheap' option or you could go for the 'quality' option. Depending on the option you choose, you would decide to go to buy your clothes from a store known for its 'bargains' (read 'cheap') or for one known for its 'designer clothes' (read 'expensive' or 'quality').

Of course cost is not the only indicator of quality but it definitely is an important one and most of us, if we can afford it, would make a multitude of small sacrifices in order to wear something with a 'designer label'.

The same thing often happens when we choose a school or a university for our children. We know many people who send their children to private schools, even if they can ill afford to do so, because they equate the high school fees with quality education and/or high standards. Are you perhaps one of them?

What then, is quality?

Before we discuss this concept, we would like you first to turn to your Reader and critically read *Text 7: Standards and Quality*, which is an adaptation of an academic paper on this topic.

Having read the preceding extract, which notions of quality and standards do you think are most prevalent in your institution? Talk to your colleagues, to learners and to the parent community about these notions, jot down their responses and then formulate your own definitions - for *quality* and *standards* – as they apply to school education.

File your definitions in the *Reflection Section* of your Learning File/Folder and keep on adjusting them as you work through this unit.

3.3 Quality Management Systems

Bondesio and Berkhout (1987:34) define a 'system' as a 'systematic collection of parts, elements, groups or units that, together, form an entity or whole'. In terms of this definition any system - an education and training system, a financial management system, an assessment system – would consist of various structures and/or sub-structures. Although the structures would serve different functions their operations would be guided and/or controlled by means of general policies and procedures to ensure that their operations benefit the system as a whole.

In South Africa the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is responsible for maintaining the quality of the education and training system. In order to do so SAQA created a number of structures and policies which, together help to regulate the processes and procedures followed by the members of the SAQA 'family', i.e. all the structures, services and organisations contributing to the education and training system.

SAQA, in distinguishing between the different roles that various members of the NQF 'family' had to perform, had the following to say:

> In many ways, the NQF system is comparable to a large organisation, having a clear and shared purpose laid out in the Act. Within the "NQF Organisation" SAQA creates the vision, sets the policies, defines the timetable, delegates the tasks and defines quality of performance for those to whom they are delegated.   It – *SAQA* – is the equivalent of the Board and senior executives of an organisation. The SGBs *(Standards Generating Bodies)* define the service standards in terms of the specific outcomes that should match the vision described by SAQA. The providers *(education and training institutions and/or training organisations)* are the powerhouses, the productive units, the creators and constituent providers of the service. The ETQAs *(Education and Training Quality Assurers)* have the quality audit and assurance role.
>
> *(SAQA, 2001:7)*

Since schools are technically part of the SAQA 'family' and the principal is the head of the school family, s/he is accountable, either explicitly or implicitly, for everything that happens in his/her school, including the creation and maintenance of the requisite quality assurance systems.

The ETQA for schooling is called *Umalusi* (derived from the Nguni word *uMalusi* which means 'shepherd') and it is tasked with ensuring the quality of assessments in school contexts (GET and FET). Go to their website (www.umalusi.org.za) to see what it is that they are doing and what their criteria are for quality assessments. Either download information that you think you could use in improving assessment in your school or jot down and file relevant points in the Activities or Resource section of your Learning File/Folder.

On its website, Umalusi defines its role as follows:

> *Umalusi is a statutory organization which monitors and improves the quality of general and further education and training in South Africa.*

It has three key functions:

- Monitoring and moderating learner achievements, and issuing certificates at key points.
- Evaluating whether providers of education and training have the capacity to deliver and assess qualifications and learning programmes and are doing so to expected standards of quality.
- Monitoring the standards of qualifications and their associated curricula.

In practice, most of the work of Umalusi centres on the FET band (it took over all the functions of the former SAFCERT) and more recently the General Education and Training Certificate.

In the policy document *Guidelines for the assessment of learners in Grade 9 in 2002*, the relationship between Umalusi and the PDEs regarding moderation is made clear:

MODERATION

37. The Assessment Policy for Grade R – 9 (Gazette 19640 of 1998) states that moderation will be carried out to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained in the assessment process. This will be done on a sample basis at the different levels of the system. Moderation mechanisms will be put in place at school, provincial and national level.
38. The Assessment Policy for Grade R – 9 (Gazette 19640 of 1998) further states that continuous assessment should be moderated externally by professional support services within the guidelines set by the provincial education departments.
39. Provincial Departments of Education will be responsible to ensure that appropriate moderation mechanisms at school / school cluster / district levels are in place to moderate School-Based Assessment.
40. The Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) will be geared to function as a moderating tool for school-based assessment.
41. It is the function of the Provinces to moderate learner performance on the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA).

42. SAFCERT [role subsequently taken over by Umalusi] would moderate all the different forms of assessment (i.e. Continuous Assessment and External Assessment) in grade 9.

This means that schools need also to look to the national and provincial departmental websites for the most recent legislation, policy and curriculum guidelines. The key websites are listed below:

- National: www.education.gov.za and www.thutong.org.za
- Eastern Cape: www.ecprov.gov.za/education
- Free State: www.fs.gov.za
- Gauteng: www.education.gpg.gov.za
- KwaZulu-Natal: www.kzneducation.gov.za
- Limpopo: www.limpopo.gov.za
- Mpumalanga: www.mpumalanga.gov.za
- North West: www.nwpg.gov.za/education
- Northern Cape: www.ncedu.ncape.gov.za
- Western Cape: www.wced.gov.za

Currently the key assessment policy documents are:

- 21 October 2005: National Protocol on Assessment and
- 11 December 2006: Addenda to FET Policy Document, NCS in the National Framework regarding National Protocol for Assessment and also learners with special needs.

However, it is possible that one or all three of these documents will have been superceded by the time you work on this module and that it why it is important for you to visit the relevant websites and maintain contact with your circuit and district offices on a regular basis.

It is important to understand that, as a result of the change in assessment policy and the centrality of CASS for an outcomes-based system, moderation, both internal and external, has been foregrounded in ways that it was not in the previous system. This can be seen as an extension of the discussion that we started in the core module *Understanding school leadership and management in the South African context* where we talked about the need for greater accountability and the need to be able to justify our actions and the decisions we have taken. Appropriate moderation processes help us to be more accountable for our assessment practices.

our comments

In a policy document dealing with quality management systems for education and training providers (SAQA 2001), SAQA indicates that debates on the most effective quality assurance model are ongoing, with some factions favouring a Total Quality Management (TQM) model and others a Conformance to Specifications (CTS) model (see Table 6).

TABLE 7: QUALITY MANAGEMENT MODELS

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT	CONFORMANCE TO SPECIFICATIONS
A holistic system in that it addresses all input, output and process related activities within an institution, creates external and internal points of	Elemental in that it can be applied to discrete areas of activity, for example a course or an examination.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT	CONFORMANCE TO SPECIFICATIONS
view and assesses everything from both these perspectives.	
Market-driven: the customer/learner is central in defining and assessing quality. This also implies that the criteria used to define quality are negotiable and in a state of flux.	From the outset the product is defined and specified. Only through changing the specification can the definition of quality be changed.
Internal and peer reviews drive assessment, though these are substantiated by fact-driven and data-gathering activities.	Assessment is done through third party validation and comparison of records and documents.

NOTE:

If you have not studied either of these models during the course of this programme, you are advised to read up on these issues – use the Internet and/or your local library for information. Also see the Recommended *Reading List* in your reader. You would also have studied a number of other models in the rest of this programme and should, as a matter of course, consider them in the creation, maintenance and review of your school system/s.

Informed by these models, SAQA formulated a set of criteria that they expect providers to satisfy (see Table 8) in setting up or reviewing their own quality management systems.   Should SAQA, or any other Education and Training Quality Assurance Body, decide to conduct a review or an audit of a school – or of any other educational institution – it would by implication use these criteria to assess the systemic effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation in question.

TABLE 8: CRITERIA FOR QUALITY SYSTEMS

CRITERION	ELEMENTS	ELABORATION
Policy statement	The organisation's aims, objectives and purposes need to be spelt out.	Should include: • Organisation's aims, values & principles & explain their link to those of NQF • Description of organisational structures, systems & activities aimed at application of values & principles & realisation of aims • Organisation's primary consumer/s – e.g. teachers, learners, parents.
Quality management systems	Outline procedure for implementing quality management in the organisation.	Clear description of nature & operations within organisation, indicating how quality is assured at all levels, e.g. • How does it create & sustain a quality culture? • How are relevance, comprehensiveness & clarity

CRITERION	ELEMENTS	ELABORATION
		of standards ensured?
		• How and how often is information about systems operations collected and by whom?
		• How are learners' needs met?
		• How and how often are programmes & processes reviewed?
		• How does it ensure that teachers possess the requisite competence to teach & assess?
		• How does it ensure that learning & assessment activities are monitored & reviewed?
		• How does it ensure that results of reviews, etc. lead to organisational improvement?
		• What mechanisms are used to provide feedback to concerned parties?
		• How does it ensure that requisite resources are available and effectively utilised?
		• How does it relate to other providers in the area?
Review mechanisms	Outline ways in which the implementation of policies would be monitored.	Should indicate how monitoring activities contribute to development, i.e.: • What monitoring mechanisms are in place? • How do they work? • How often are they used? • By whom? • How are findings reported to the organisation? • How do findings inform organisational improvement efforts?
Programme delivery	Outline ways in which learning programmes would be developed, delivered and	Should provide a clear description of the programme/s offered and the ways in which they relate to

CRITERION	ELEMENTS	ELABORATION
	evaluated.	NQF principles and aims
Staff policies	Outline processes and procedures for staff selection, appraisal and development	Should indicate: Staff competence i.t.o. NQF requirements Opportunities created for staff development Mechanisms to ensure that staff adhere to organisational requirements and feed results back into programme delivery and assessment practices.
Learner policies	Outline policies and procedures for the selection, guidance and support of learners.	Should describe what organisation does to support learners and how they receive feedback on their performance.
Assessment policies	Outline policies and procedures for forms of assessment, indicating how they are used and managed.	Describe approaches used in assessment, indicating its alignment with NQF principles, e.g.: • How are assessments conducted, by whom and how often? • What mechanisms are in place to assure the quality of assessments? • How are learners given feedback on assessment, how often & by whom? • How are assessment results used to identify weaknesses and provide learners with support? • How are assessment results fed back into programme development?
Management systems and polices	Indicate the financial, administrative and physical structures and resources of the organisation as well as the accountability procedures followed within the organisation.	Indicate its capacity to manage the organisation in an effective, efficient and accountable way, e.g.: • What does its management and administrative structure look like? • How are decisions taken, by whom & in relation to what? • What is its financial resource base and how is it managed? • Does it have adequate human & material resources to carry out its functions?

CRITERION	ELEMENTS	ELABORATION
		• Is it managed in a transparent & accountable way?

activity 3b

time allocation

± 5 days

Carefully study Table 8, which contains SAQA's criteria for quality management systems as well as explanations of what these mean.

Then, using the SAQA criteria, determine whether or not the quality management system in your school is in place and whether or not it is as effective and/or efficient as it should be.

We suggest that the easiest way to conduct the evaluation is to organize staff and/or learner workshops aimed at determining whether or not existing systems in your school/institution contribute to the planning and conducting of quality assessments and/or whether all the parts/elements of the system contribute to the achievement of this purpose. Since workshops like these are in effect critical reflection exercises, you should encourage discussion and/or debate on the manageability, validity and effectiveness of current assessment standards, processes, procedures and decisions at the school.

We suggest moreover, that you reformulate the SAQA criteria as questions that you could use for group discussions at the workshop.

Should you wish to focus specifically on the moderation aspect of quality management, you could consider the following questions. Please feel free to eliminate any that you think are irrelevant and/or to add any that you think are missing.

- Have any of the teachers at your school been trained as assessors or moderators? If not, what can be done about it?
- Does the school have access to any external assessors or moderators? If not, what can be done about it?
- Which resources necessary for moderation are unavailable to the school?
- Which of these 'missing' resources can the school access/obtain without cost?
- In which subject/s or learning area/s do learners perform well? Why is this?
- In which subject/s or learning area/s do learners perform poorly? Why is this?
- What can be done to improve learner performance in the weak areas?
- Is the system as a whole sensitive to your school context and community? Explain.

Having analysed the existing system, complete the table that follows with specific reference to assessment and/or moderation in your school at this particular moment.

TABLE 9 :SW O T ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Now, using the information in the table as a basis, draw one or more conclusions about the adequacy of the system discussed and end with one or more resolutions about the way forward.

Assignment 2

Using the self-evaluation activity you have just completed as a basis, write an evaluation report in which you:

- Detail the assessment and moderation systems in your school
- Explain the purpose of the evaluation
- Describe the procedures you followed in conducting the evaluation
- List the criteria (those in the SAQA Table) you used for the evaluation
- Summarize the results of the evaluation in the form of findings/outcomes
- Draw a conclusion about the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the school's system
- Suggest/recommend strategies for improving the existing system so that it will satisfy the SAQA and relevant DoE criteria.

Submit this report, with relevant attachments (evidence that the workshop and/or the evaluation actually took place) to your lecturer for assessment purposes.

3.4 Moderation management

Creating a quality management system is one thing. Managing it is something quite different. The same is true for moderation. It is one thing to know what it is and what it entails but it is an entirely different matter to manage it at a subject, departmental or institutional level.

stop & think

Think about this for a minute. What do you think someone other than the moderator him/herself who has to manage the moderation process would have to do? In a school context, who would that person most likely be? What structures would s/he have to create to ensure that the moderation process could take place? What processes and procedures should s/he put in place to ensure that the moderation process is effective and efficient? What should s/he consider and/or acquire in terms of resources – human, physical, financial – to ensure that moderators can do their work properly? How should s/he respond to the results of moderation processes and/or what should s/he do with the information provided by moderators?

activity 3c

time allocation

± 60 min

One of the things that the moderation manager – usually the school principal or the Head of a Subject or Department – will have to do is to select suitable people to act as moderators.
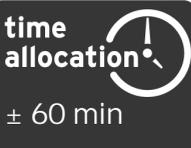
Remember the rough notes you jotted down in Unit 1 when we asked you to think of what qualities you would like to see in a moderator?

Find those notes in your Learning File/Folder and, pretending that you are the moderation manager, use them as basis for compiling a set of criteria that could be used in the selection of moderators in your school.

File this list in your Learning File/Folder.

our comments

Ideally, moderators should be registered as such in the sector where moderation is done, e.g. as a moderator in schools but, since this was not a requirement in the past, each institution will have to select and train its own moderators. These moderators would then have to accept responsibility for the quality of assessment instruments, processes and procedures. By implication they would have access to instruments before assessments are conducted so that the necessary adjustments could be timeously effected. They would also, however, have to know the institutional assessment policy and have access to the institutional assessment plan so that they can determine whether assessment practices are in line with these.

In cases where there are not qualified/trained moderators in an institution, Heads of departments and classroom teachers have to share the responsibility of ensuring the quality of assessments. As indicated in the Introductory Unit to this module, classroom teachers would, for example, have to check that the results of self- and peer assessments done by learners are up to standard. Heads of Department would have to check that the assessment tasks that teachers in their department set are sufficient as well as appropriate to the assessment purpose,

subject/learning area and target group. S/he should also review/moderate tasks/tests marked by the teachers in her/his department to ensure that the marking was fair, consistent and accurate. S/he should, moreover, monitor the recording and reporting of assessment results in her/his department.

Another responsibility of the moderation manager would be to ensure that the moderator prepares a report detailing his/her findings and recommendations and that the report is discussed with the teachers/assessors concerned.

One way of doing so is to organize a general staff meeting where the manager shares the moderator's report with the staff members. Another strategy could be to create opportunities for the moderator/s to meet individually or in groups with the teachers whose work was moderated.

Whichever strategy the manager chooses, s/he must ensure that moderators share with assessors the moderation findings, their implications for subsequent assessment processes, and the processes that were followed during the moderation process. Assessors should be given the opportunity to discuss the findings and/or the processes with the moderator and, if applicable, to appeal against the outcome/s.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the moderation manager to ensure that moderation in general, and post-moderation meetings in particular:

- Establish a common understanding between assessors and moderators as regards outcomes, standards and processes to be followed in order to ensure quality assessment
- Promote adherence to sound assessment and moderation principles
- Enhance the development and maintenance of institutional quality management systems
- Contribute towards the further development of assessors as needed
- Promote collaborative approaches to assessment.

stop & think

Which of the two feedback approaches would you prefer if you were an assessor – the general staff meeting or the individual, one-on-one sessions? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Which, do you think, would contribute most to staff development? Why?

our comments

While post-moderation meetings are essential and valuable, it is our contention that real change will only occur if education managers create opportunities for their staff to be trained as moderators, either at school or elsewhere. Training workshops should be run by qualified and/or registered moderators and should focus on practical issues – what moderators should look for when checking assessment instruments and procedures; how they should record and report their observations, and what they could do to ensure that moderation contributes not only to better assessment but also to the empowerment of all those involved in the assessment process.

Initial training could be aimed at the improvement of assessment instruments and on the improved collection and interpretation of assessment evidence. It could also train educators in planning and conducting assessment events and the setting

and maintenance of common standards. In this regard the moderation manager could consider setting up 'agreement trialling', an approach aimed at the creation and maintenance of common standards, used with some success all over the world.

An agreement trial is a meeting between those directly involved in making assessments in the same area. It is designed to assist assessors in arriving at similar interpretations of evidence of learner achievement in that area, in relation to particular assessment criteria or requirements.

Agreement trials can be held at all levels of the system. In schools, they could, for example, be held between Heads of Departments, same grade teachers and/or teachers who teach the same subject or learning area. Trials could be an internal affair – that is, involving teachers from a single school – or a collaborative affair – that is, involving teachers from different schools as a networking exercise.

Agreement trials are a means whereby assessors can establish a basis for reliable and valid judgements of learner achievement in general. Moderation, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with determining whether or not the judgements made by assessors were, in fact, valid and reliable. The primary purpose of agreement trails is to develop assessor expertise. The primary purpose of moderation is to review assessors' judgements – assessor development is purely incidental.

Agreement trials will typically be institutionally based and can take place at any time, that is, whenever assessors feel a need for them. Moderation might be an internal or an external event, or a combination of the two takes place after a specific assessment occasion/event. Judgements and/or comments are, therefore, applicable to the results of that particular event only.

During agreement trials, samples – of instruments and evidence – are used to explore issues of reliability and validity. During moderation samples are analysed to determine whether or not assessment was valid and reliable in respect of the *sample* but the conclusion is then generalized to the whole population, in other words to the validity and reliability of assessment for all those who were assessed. In other words, if the moderators were of the opinion that assessment of the sample they reviewed was not reliable and/or valid, they would infer that the assessor's judgement of none of the other people who were assessed was valid and/or reliable either and they could recommend that all of them had to be remarked.

While agreement trials could, therefore, be regarded as an investment in staff development – a training initiative – moderation should be regarded as an investment in quality assurance – an accountability exercise.

stop & think !

Can you think of other reasons why agreement trialing might be necessary in your school? What other processes/techniques could be used alongside agreement trialing, within a training program for assessors? Are there better ways of achieving the same results/outcomes? What timescale would be needed to run such a programme?

activity 3d

time allocation
± 90 min

Read the section on agreement trialling in your Reader (*Text 8*) and then draw a table consisting of two columns, one titled *Agreement Trials* and the other *Moderation.* Indicate, in the table, the similarities and differences between moderation and agreement trialling.
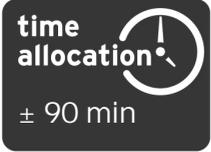
Now call a meeting with teachers who teach the same grade, subject or learning area that you do. Introduce the notion of agreement trials to them (use your table as a visual aid or a handout) and then facilitate a discussion on the advantages and/or disadvantages of using agreement trials at your school. Consider, for example:
- Principles of agreement
- Approach to be adopted in conducting agreement trials
- Resource and time implications
- Alignment of agreement principles to existing management structures
- Getting staff buy-in for agreement trials.

our comments

It is unlikely that initial training in assessment will do much more than provide an understanding of the issues involved, some frames of reference within which to operate, and a limited amount of experience of working as an assessor. Experience suggests that the investment in training programmes is generally wasted unless some type of continuous support is available. Actual monitoring of assessment activity is not, by itself, an adequate support mechanism if assessors' expertise is to develop.

Support processes, like assessors' involvement in agreement trials, will enable them to re-appraise and considerably extend that experience. Agreement trials enable the assessor to build up his/her own experience and expertise in assessment through ongoing, practical assessment activity. They complement training programmes, operating on a local basis, either within the assessors' own institution or in small, local networks.

activity 3e

time allocation
± 2 hours

Ask one or more of your colleagues at a neighbouring school or a departmental official to attend your post-moderation training workshop/s and to provide you with a written report on its effectiveness.

3.5 Conclusion

This was the final unit in the module on Moderation. As such it focused on notions of quality, the creation, maintenance and evaluation of a quality management system in general and in the context of educational institutions in particular.

Together the units in this module created the opportunity for you to learn more about quality assurance, with specific reference to the roles played by moderators in this regard. You were shown how moderators go to work in judging the quality of assessment instruments, processes, procedures and results and you were given the opportunity of acting as moderators in your own work context. Hopefully the module also stimulated your interest in the many strategies that could be used for staff development purposes, with particular reference to development in assessment and moderation.

It is important to stress that none of the processes discussed in this module – assessment, moderation, initial training or agreement trials – individually or collectively – is likely to meet the need for the professional development of staff in the area of assessment, unless they operate against a background of an appropriate management structure. It is the management structure that provides the context for the training, and which will make the ongoing development of assessors and/or the improvement of assessment practices a regular feature of staff development programmes.

We trust that you have enjoyed this module, that it has broadened your understanding of accountability and quality assurance in general and of moderation in particular and that it has given you the confidence not only to act as a moderator but also to use moderation as a means of quality assurance in your own classroom or school.

Final Assignment

Revisit the outcomes and assessment standards of this module and compile a portfolio of evidence that will convince your lecturer of your competence as a moderator and submit your portfolio for assessment.

NOTE:

You should refer to all the activities you filed in the Activities and Reflection Sections of your Learning File/Folder in doing this assignment, using these as sources of evidence and indicating in your report how and when such 'evidence' was collected or generated.

OR

Compile a training manual for use in the training of moderators (duties, functions, ethics, processes/procedures, criteria, accommodation of special needs, timelines), and ask some of your colleagues (own or neighbouring school) to assess it in terms of its purpose and target audience prior to the training session. Hand in both the manual and their report.

OR

Design a set of guidelines that moderators could use in evaluating the integrity and standard of assessment procedures at your school & ask some of your colleagues (own or neighbouring school) to assess it in terms of its purpose and target audience prior to the training session. Hand in both the guidelines and your colleagues' report.

Texts & Templates

The reader contains a variety of different texts which were referred to in the Learning Guide and which provide the basis of activities or extensions of the discussion in the main text. Some templates have also been repeated for easier duplication.

Reader
Text 1: Bloom's taxonomy: a tabular illustration

COGNITIVE ABILITIES	CLARIFICATION / EXPLANATION	REQUISITE LEARNER ACTIVITIES
Knowledge	Refers to the ability to recall what was learnt, e.g. facts, processes, procedures, formulae, etc.	Learners should show that they recognise things for what they are by identifying, defining, listing, labelling, matching, and naming these
Understanding	Refers to the ability to make sense of something, i.e. to process information and/or to read 'between the lines'	Learners should be able to explain things in their own words by, for example, describing, summarizing, paraphrasing, generalizing, etc.
Application	Refers to the ability to use what one knows and understands at an abstract level as basis for doing practical things.	Learners should prove that they can *do* something with what they know and understand by, for example, solving problems, creating texts, doing research, managing a project, constructing models, using some kind of apparatus (e.g. a computer, stove, camera), etc.
Analysis	Refers to the ability to identify relationships between different elements, and/or to break down materials into their composite parts to see how they are put together and/or how they work.	Learners should show that they can identify relationships between different things by comparing/contrasting and/or classifying/categorizing these; justifying their responses; providing examples/illustrations of things, drawing inferences/conclusions, etc.
Synthesis	Refers to the ability to create something 'whole' by rearranging individual parts into something new/original. As is the case in analysis, this assumes an awareness of the relationships between parts.	Learners should show that they can combine, compile, construct, organize, write, draw and build things. What they need to do to prove this ability is the direct opposite of what they did in analysis.
Evaluation	Refers to the ability to judge the value or quality of something.	Learners should show that they can make judgements on the basis of evidence rather than on their own biases or perceptions, i.e. to distinguish between what they prefer/like and what is good/right, e.g. a poem, a performance, a piece of writing, a lesson.

Note:

While these categories are given here as discrete categories they are interdependent, with the higher cognitive skills dependent on the lower ones. A person would not, for example, be able to judge whether a sonnet is good or bad unless s/he has analysed it to see whether it satisfies the criteria for a good sonnet, and s/he will not be able to analyse it unless s/he knows what a good sonnet should look like. Knowledge and understanding are, therefore, essential to the development of all the other cognitive abilities.

Text 2: Unit standard for Moderate Assessment

PURPOSE OF THE UNIT STANDARD

This unit standard is for people who moderate or intend to moderate assessments against unit standards and/or qualifications. This unit standard will contribute towards the achievement of a variety of Education Training and Development Practices and Human Resource Development related qualifications.

A candidate-moderator who has achieved this unit standard will be able to moderate assessment activities against the relevant standards and qualifications. The candidate-moderator will be able to use the prescribed Quality Assurance procedures in a fair, valid, reliable and practicable manner that is free of all bias and discrimination, paying particular attention to the three groups targeted for redress: race, gender and disability.

In particular, people credited with this unit standard are able to:
- Plan and prepare for moderation
- Conduct moderation
- Advise and support assessors and assessment agencies
- Report, record and administer moderation
- Review moderation systems and processes

LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners have previous assessment experience when starting to learn towards this unit standard, and in particular, recognition for the unit standard: "Conduct assessment of learning outcomes".

It is further assumed that the person is competent within the filed in which they are moderating assessments.

UNIT STANDARD RANGE

The following scope and context applies to the whole unit standard:
- Evidence must be gathered for moderation of assessments of candidates with special needs, and RPL cases.
- Moderation must cover a range of assessment practices including assessment instruments, assessment design and methodology, assessment records; reporting and feedback mechanisms.
- Evidence must be gathered for moderation of assessments involving a variety of assessment techniques, including work samples, simulations, role-plays, written, oral, portfolios and projects.
- Moderation interactions could include pre-moderation interaction; standards discussion;
recording and record keeping; reporting and feedback mechanisms; post-moderation

interaction and support and recommendations.

Further range statements are provided in the body of the unit standard where they apply to particular specific outcomes or assessment criteria.

UNIT STANDARD OUTCOME HEADER

null

Specific Outcomes and Assessment Criteria:

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

Plan and prepare for moderation

OUTCOME RANGE

The planning and preparation is to take place within the context of an existing moderation system.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1

1. A moderation system is confirmed to be in place and planning and preparation activities are aligned with moderation system requirements.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2

2. The scope of the moderation is confirmed with relevant parties.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

Parties include the assessors or assessment agencies and moderating bodies.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3

3. Planning of the scope and nature of the moderation activities ensure the manageability of moderation and enable a fair judgement to be passed on the assessments under review.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 4

4. The contexts of the assessments under review are clarified with the assessors or assessment agency, and special needs are taken into consideration in the planning.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 5

5. Moderation processes are sufficient to deal with all common forms of evidence including evidence gathered for recognition of prior learning.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 6

6. The documentation is prepared in line with the moderation system requirements and in such a way as to ensure moderation decisions are

clearly documented.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 7

7. Required physical and human resources are ensured to be ready and available for use. Logistical arrangements are confirmed with relevant role-players prior to the moderation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 8

8. A variety of moderation techniques are described and compared in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications. The descriptions address the need to uphold the principles of assessment and the need for manageable, credible and reliable moderation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

See "Supplementary information" for a definition of assessment principles.

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

Conduct moderation

OUTCOME RANGE

- Moderation to address the design of the assessment, activities before, during and after assessment, and assessment documentation.
- Moderation to include assessments of candidates with special needs and for RPL cases.
- Evidence must be gathered for on-site and off-site moderation.
- Evidence must be gathered for moderation in situations where
  - the moderation process confirms the assessment results, and where
  - the moderation process finds it cannot uphold the assessment results.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1

1. The moderation is conducted in accordance with the moderation plan. Unforeseen events are handled without compromising the validity of the moderation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2

2. The assessment instruments and process are checked and judged in terms of their appropriateness, fairness, validity and sufficiency for assessment. The moderation decision enables the quality assurance body`s requirements for fairness, appropriateness, validity and sufficiency to be achieved.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

Requirements include the interpretation of assessment criteria and correct application of assessment procedures.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3

3. Confirmation of assessment decisions enables the quality assurance body`s requirements for consistency to be achieved.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 4

4. Moderation confirms that special needs of candidates have been provided for but without compromising the required standards.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 5

5. The proportion of assessment decisions selected for verification meets the quality assurance body`s requirements for consistency and reliability and the use of time and resources.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 6

6. Appeals against assessment decisions are handled in accordance with the appeal procedures.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 7

7. Key principles of assessment are described in terms of their importance and effect on the assessment and the application of the assessment results.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 8

8. A variety of assessment methods are described and compared in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

The description of methods should cover situations for gathering evidence of abilities in problem solving, knowledge, understanding, practical and technical skills, personal and attitudinal skills and values.

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

Advise and support assessors and assessment agencies.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1

1. The nature and quality of advice facilitates a common understanding of the relevant standards and issues related to their assessment by assessors.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2

2. The nature and quality of advice promotes assessment in accordance with good assessment principles and enhances the development and maintenance of quality management systems in line with ETQA requirements.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

See definition of assessment principles under "Supplementary information".

Advice on quality management systems includes planning, staffing, resourcing, training and recording systems.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3

3. All communications are conducted in accordance with relevant confidentiality requirements.

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 4

Report, record and administer moderation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1

1. Moderation findings are reported to designated role-players within agreed time-frames and according to the quality assurance body`s requirements for format and content.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION RANGE

Role-players could include ETQA or Moderating Body personnel, internal or external moderators and assessors.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2

2. Records are kept and maintained in accordance with ETQA requirements.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3

3. Confidentiality of information relating to candidates, assessors and assessing agencies is preserved in accordance with the requirements of the assessing agency and ETQA requirements

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 5

Review moderation systems and processes.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1

1. Strengths and weaknesses of moderation systems and processes are identified in terms of their manageability and potential to make judgements on the quality and validity of assessment decisions.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2

2. Recommendations to moderation systems and processes have the potential to facilitate their improvement in line with ETQA requirements and overall manageability.

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3

3. The review enhances the credibility and integrity of the recognition system.

UNIT STANDARD ACCREDITATION AND MODERATION OPTIONS

- An individual wishing to be assessed, (including through RPL) against this unit standard may apply to an assessment agency, assessor or provider institution accredited by the relevant ETQA.
- Anyone assessing a candidate-moderator against this unit standard must be registered as an assessor with the relevant ETQA.
- Any institution offering learning that will enable achievement of this unit standard must be accredited as a provider with the relevant ETQA.
- Moderation of assessment will be conducted by the relevant ETQA at its discretion.

UNIT STANDARD ESSENTIAL EMBEDDED KNOWLEDGE

The following essential embedded knowledge will be assessed through assessment of the specific outcomes in terms of the stipulated assessment criteria. Candidates are unlikely to achieve all the specific outcomes, to the standards described in the assessment criteria, without knowledge of the listed embedded knowledge. This means that for the most part, the possession or lack of the knowledge can be directly inferred from the quality of the candidate`s performance. Where direct assessment of knowledge is required, assessment criteria have been included in the body of the unit standard.

- Principles of assessment - see assessment criterion 2.7
- Principles and practices of RPL
- Methods of assessment - see assessment criterion 2.8
- The principles and mechanisms of the NQF
- Assessment policies and ETQA requirements
- Moderation techniques and systems and specific moderation requirements -see assesment criterion 1.8
- The role and function of a moderator
- Knowledge of quality assurance policy and procedures
- Understanding of organisational or institutional contexts

Critical Cross-field Outcomes (CCFO):

UNIT STANDARD CCFO IDENTIFYING

Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking: planning for contingencies, candidates with special needs, problems that arise during moderation, suggesting changes to moderation following review.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO WORKING

Work effectively in a team using critical and creative thinking: working with assessors and other relevant parties during moderation, as well as post-moderation.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO ORGANISING

Organize and manage oneself and ones activities: planning, preparing, conducting and recording the moderation.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO COLLECTING

Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information: gather, evaluate and judge evidence and the assessment process.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO COMMUNICATING

Communicate effectively: communicate with assessors and other relevant parties during moderation, and provide feedback.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO DEMONSTRATING

Demonstrate the world as a set of related systems: understanding the impact of moderation assessment on individuals, organisations and the credibility of recognition through NQF systems.

UNIT STANDARD CCFO CONTRIBUTING

Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts: plan, conduct and give feedback on moderation in a culturally sensitive manner.

UNIT STANDARD NOTES

This unit standard has been replaced by 115759 which is, Conduct moderation of outcomes-based assessments, 10 credits, NQF Level 6, as from 11 August 2004.

Definition of Terms:
- Assessment - a process in which evidence of performance is gathered and evaluated against agreed criteria.
- Performance - includes skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes, and the ability to transfer these to new situations.
- Assessment criteria - state the type and quality of performance against which the candidate is assessed.
- Candidate - person whose performance is being assessed by the assessor.
- Moderation - a process for making judgements on the quality and result of assessments, with the purpose of confirming assessment judgements.

Principles of assessment:

- Appropriateness: The method of assessment is suited to the performance being assessed.
- Fairness: The method of assessment does not present any barriers to achievements, which are not related to the evidence.
- Manageability: The methods used make for easily arranged, cost effective assessments which do not unduly interfere with learning.
- Integration into work or learning: Evidence collection is integrated into the work or learning process where this is appropriate and feasible.
- Validity: The assessment focuses on the requirements laid down in the Standard; i.e. the assessment is fit for purpose.
- Direct: The activities in the assessment mirror the conditions of actual performance as closely as possible
- Authenticity: The assessor is satisfied that the work being assessed is attributable to the person being assessed.
- Sufficient: The evidence collected establishes that all criteria have been met and that performance to the required Standard can be repeated consistently.
- Systematic: Planning and recording is sufficiently rigorous to ensure that assessment is fair.
- Open: Learners can contribute to the planning and accumulation of evidence. Assessment candidates understand the assessment process and the criteria that apply.
- Consistent: The same assessor would make the same judgement again in similar circumstances.

The judgement made is similar to the judgement that would be made by other assessors.

Text 3:   Module outline for Moderate Assessment

10 CREDITS NQF LEVEL 6 (7977)

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
Demonstrate understanding of moderation within the context of an outcomes-based assessment system.	Comprehensive knowledge of the school and departmental assessment and moderation policies. Identify, explain, evaluate and communicate key elements, and concepts relevant to assessment moderation. Recognition of prior knowledge – how to critique own knowledge and assumptions with regard to assessment. Societal pressures on assessment.	Moderation is explained in terms of its contribution to quality assured assessment and recognition systems within the context of principles and regulations concerning the NQF. A variety of moderation methods are described and compared in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications. The descriptions show how moderation is intended to uphold the need for manageable, credible and reliable assessments. Key principles of assessment are described in terms of their importance and effect on the assessment and the application of the assessment results. Examples are provided to show how moderation may be effective in ensuring the principles of assessment are upheld. Examples are provided to show how moderation activities could verify the fairness and appropriateness of assessment methods and activities used by assessors in different assessment situations.	Prepare a presentation to the staff for a staff meeting about the moderation process review focussing on the following: • Relevant official documents • Communication during the moderation process • Moderation implementation plan • Ethics and confidentiality • The role of the SMT • The role of peer assessment • Evidence required during the moderation process • Identification of support requirement • The strengths and the weaknesses of the moderation process. Make and implement recommendations for improving the moderation process.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
Plan and prepare for moderation.	Role and function of moderation as an integral quality assurance process. Framework of policy, planning, communication, methodology, timeframes and logistical elements governing moderation.	Planning and preparation activities are aligned with moderation system requirements. The scope of the moderation is confirmed with relevant parties. Planning of the extent of moderation and methods of moderation ensures manageability of the process. Planning makes provision for sufficient moderation evidence to enable a reliable judgement to be passed on the assessments under review. The contexts of the assessments under review are clarified with the assessors or assessment agency, and special needs are taken into consideration in the moderation planning. Moderation methods and processes are sufficient to deal with all common forms of evidence for the assessments to be moderated, including evidence gathered for recognition of prior learning. The documentation is prepared in line with the moderation system requirements and in such a way as to ensure moderation decisions are clearly documented.	

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
		Required physical and human resources are ready and available for use. Logical arrangements are confirmed with relevant role-players prior to the moderation.	
Conduct moderation.	Does the instrument assess the outcomes? How the assessment processes promote the learning culture in the school Recognise reliable and trustworthy evidence of assessment.	The moderation is conducted in accordance with the moderation plan. Unforeseen events are handled without compromising the validity of the moderation. The assessment instruments and process are checked and judged in terms of the extent to which the principles of good assessment are upheld. Moderation confirms that special needs of candidates have been provided for but without compromising the requirements specified in the relevant outcome statements. The proportion of assessments selected for checking meets the quality assurance body's requirements for consistency and reliability. The	

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
		use of time and resources is justified by the assessment history or record of the assessors and/or assessment agency under consideration. Appeals against assessment decisions are handled in accordance with organisational appeal procedures. The moderation decision is consistent with the quality assurance body's requirements for fairness, validity and reliability of assessments to be achieved.	
Advise and support assessors	Reflective practices – being able to analyse the results of the moderation process, the feedback thereof and develop constructive and timely remedial response.	The nature and quality of advice facilitates a common understanding of the relevant outcomes and criteria, and issues related to their assessment by assessors. The nature and quality of advice promotes assessment in accordance with good assessment principles and enhances the development and maintenance of quality management systems in line with ETQA requirements. Support contributes towards the further development of assessors as needed. All communications are conducted in accordance with relevant	

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
		confidentiality requirements.	
Report, record and administer moderation.	Knowledge of participative strategies of management and leadership to promote a collaborative approach to assessment. Knowledge of appropriate administrative procedures, e.g. recording, reporting and confidentiality. Knowledge of assessment and moderation of assessment instruments.	Moderation findings are reported to designated role-players within agreed time frames and according to the quality assurance body's requirements for format and content. Records are maintained in accordance with organisational quality assurance and ETQA requirements. Confidentiality of information relating to candidates and assessors is preserved in accordance with organisational quality assurance and ETQA requirements.	
Review moderation systems and processes.	Developing a school wide moderation policy and the systems required for its implementation.	Strengths and weaknesses of moderation systems and processes are identified in terms of their manageability and effectiveness in facilitating judgements on the quality and validity of assessment decisions. Recommendations contribute towards the improvement of moderation systems and processes in line with ETQA requirements and overall manageability.	Reflect on assessment moderation practices in our school. Aspects that must be addressed are: • Standard • Areas for improvement • Benchmarks • Manageability • Overall effectiveness of implementation.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM OUTLINE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
		The review enhances the credibility and integrity of the recognition system.	

Text 4: Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA)

Outcomes-based assessment, just like outcomes-based lesson planning, outcomes-based teaching and learning, and outcomes-based materials development must take place in terms of Spady's four operational OBE principles, namely *clarity of focus, high expectations, design down,* and *expanded opportunities*.

Remember that **operational** principles are not concerned with assumptions or theories; they are concerned with action. In other words they are the 'rules' that should govern all outcomes-based actions, decisions, structures and processes. This includes assessment (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 10: OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLE	THIS MEANS THAT:	PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
CLARITY OF FOCUS	The assessment purpose, focus, procedures and target group should be clear to all concerned.	Teachers/assessors should know exactly which group is being targeted for assessment.
		Teachers/assessors and learners should know why they are being assessed, which knowledge/skills will be assessed, how this will be done, by whom, when and where
		Learners should also know what criteria will be used to determine competence and what avenues will be available to them should they wish to appeal against assessment decisions
DESIGN DOWN	The design of assessment and evaluation instruments should start with the identification of the outcomes that guide the collection of evidence and/or the standards against which learner performance will be judged.	The outcome/s and/or assessment standard/s that are the focus of the particular assessment task should be used as starting point for the design of assessment instruments.
		Assessment instruments should be appropriate to the assessment purpose and target group.
		Evaluation criteria should be designed down from the standards against which learner performance will be assessed.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLE	THIS MEANS THAT:	PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	The standards against which performance will be judged are the same for all learners irrespective of individual differences/needs.	Teachers/assessors should assess all learners in the target group against the same outcome/s and/or assessment standards.
		Criteria used to judge learner performance against the assessment standards should help assessors to distinguish between performances that are average, below or above average.
EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY	The instruments/methods used to collect evidence of learner competence and/or the timing of assessments must take cognizance of individual learner needs and/or differences.	Assessment instruments should be designed in such a way that they accommodate different learning styles and/or needs.
		Provision should be made to assess learners at different times – when they are ready to be assessed
		Learners should have more than one chance to demonstrate their competence in a particular area
		Learners who struggle to meet the standards must receive remedial support before they try again.

Text 5:   Assessment instruments

Before designing assessment instruments the assessor has to be very clear about its use – is it going to be used to collect or to interpret assessment evidence? While these two instruments are related to each other in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills focus they are not the same.

Instruments for evidence collection

There is currently a whole range of new instruments aimed at collecting evidence of learner knowledge, skills and attitudes, including the traditional form, namely writing. While the list of instruments that follows is by no means exhaustive, it does give the novice assessor some indication of the tools that could be used to determine learner competence at classroom, subject and/or learning area levels. Note that each of these instruments serves a very specific purpose and should not be used simply because they are easy to mark or to set.

1) ***Multiple-choice*** tests are perceived as objective tests that are best used to assess learners' knowledge and understanding but also their ability to analyse and to apply knowledge and understanding in solving problems and/or arriving at the correct answer.

    EXAMPLE

    The content, tone and style of a piece of writing usually reflect the source from which it comes. Study the extract that follows and then answer the questions that follow.

    No one method is suitable or practicable for all types of business. In normal circumstances, stock is a current asset intended to be held for the minimum length of time prior to the realization and therefore the usual basis of valuation should be the lower cost of the market value.

    ```
    1. This extract is written in:
       A. an angry tone
       B. neutral tone
       C. sad tone
       D. happy tone

    2. The language used in this extract can be described as:
       A. emotive
       B. factual
       C. picturesque
       D. ambiguous
    ```

2) ***True and False*** *tests* are primarily used to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. True and false items could, however, also be used to assess learners' thinking ability and/or their attitudes. In these instances they would consist of a short text in which someone argues for or against something and the learners has to indicate whether or not the argument is sound and/or where someone's behaviour is described and learners have to indicate whether or not the behaviour is acceptable/appropriate. To eliminate the

danger of learners simply guessing the answer in such tests is to ask them to give a reason for their choice in each case.

EXAMPLE

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS		
1) Forms part of the Constitution	TRUE	FALSE
2) makes smoking a criminal offence	TRUE	FALSE
3) gives citizens the right to practise their own religion	TRUE	FALSE
4) imposes English as a medium of instruction in all schools	TRUE	FALSE
5) allows for freedom of association	TRUE	FALSE
6) stipulates that murder and rape are capital offences	TRUE	FALSE

This is an example of a straightforward true or false test but these tests could also be used to assess learners' thinking ability and/or their attitudes. In these instances they would consist of a short text in which:

- Someone argues for or against something and the learners has to indicate whether or not the argument is sound
- Someone's behaviour is described and learners have to indicate whether or not the behaviour is acceptable/appropriate

Read the extract below and then indicate whether or not Sam's behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable.

Sam Isaacs is a 17-year old boy. About a month ago he started feeling very tired. He also contracted a cold and, eventually, a cough. Notwithstanding the fact that he used the medicine prescribed to him by the doctor he could not shake off the cold. One of his friends suggested that he should go for an Aids test. To Sam's dismay he tested positive. He remembered that his uncle told him that HIV/Aids could be cured if one had intercourse with a virgin. Desperate to be cured, Sam went to the station, waylaid a girl on her way back from school and raped her. Happy that he would now be cured, Sam went back home without feeling any guilt about his act.

ACCEPTABLE	UNACCEPTABLE

The biggest weakness of *True or False Tests* is that they lend themselves to guessing. Guessing could, however, be eliminated if learners are required, at the end of each item, to give a reason for their answer.

3) *Mix and match* tests assess learners' knowledge and understanding only. The tests consist of two columns of words, phrases, or statements. The statements in the right hand column are usually muddled or mixed up. Learners are required to find a word, phrase or statement in the right hand column that matches each item in the left hand column.

EXAMPLE

Find the word in the right-hand column that is closest to the meaning of each of the words in the left hand column. Do not rewrite the words; simply write the number of the word in the left hand column, followed by the appropriate symbol in the right-hand column.

1. Soweto	(a) A process by means of which statisticians determine the size and composition of a nation or country
2. Egoli	(b) An African word that means 'City of Gold'
3.Parliament	(c) An event when all the people of a democratic country go to the polls to vote
4. Census	(d) An anagram for South Western Township
5. Election	(e) The highest law-making body in a democratic country

4) *Cloze procedure* *tests* are texts from which certain words, phrases or clauses have been left out and learners are required to 'fill in the blanks'. In order to construct a cloze test, teachers/assessors take a text (from a textbook or a set of notes) and rewrite this, leaving blanks where learners have to fill in the answers. In content subjects such tests do little more than assess learners' knowledge, i.e. what they have learnt or memorized and can remember. For each gap there is usually only one correct answer. In languages they are used to assess learners' knowledge and understanding of language usage. In this case there is seldom only one correct answer. The only criterion is that the learners' answers must demonstrate that they understand how language works and the text must make sense when all the words have been filled in.

EXAMPLE OF A CLOZE TEST

Sophie Matabane is an old woman who lives in the deep rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Every morning she gets up very early and <u>builds</u> a fire in her <u>coal</u> stove. While the stove <u>is</u> warming up, she goes <u>to</u> the river to fetch <u>water</u> for her and her <u>family's</u> daily needs. When she <u>returns</u> she fills a pot <u>with</u> water and puts it <u>on</u> the stove. As soon <u>as</u> the water starts boiling, <u>she</u> stirs in some mealie <u>meal</u> and makes her family <u>some</u> pap to give them <u>sustenance</u> for the day. She <u>then</u> wakes up all the <u>members</u> of her family, sees <u>to</u> it that the children <u>are</u> dressed, washed and fed <u>and</u> sends them off to <u>school</u>. Once her husband has gone off to work, she starts cleaning her hut.

You will note that, in this example, every fifth word has been underlined. These are the words that will be left out and which, ideally, learners will have to fill in to complete the blanks. You will also note that they represent a wide range of language structures such as nouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, etc. Many of the 'correct' answers could be replaced with others that have more or less the same meaning and these would have to be accepted as 'alternate' answers, e.g.

- Builds = makes
- Returns = comes back
- Some = mealie
- Sustenance = food, energy, strength

Teachers who use cloze procedure test should, therefore, be flexible without lowering standards and/or simply accepting any answer that the learners provide. The answers must demonstrate that learners know how language works and must make sense in the context of the text.

5) In an *open question* test there is usually more than one possible/correct answer while there is only one correct answer in a *closed question* test there is only one correct answer for each question. An example of a closed question could be something like: 'Who is the current president of South Africa?' An example of a closed question could be something like 'How would you go about finding money to start your own small business?' You will note that closed questions are aimed at assessing learners' knowledge while open questions are aimed at assessing their understanding and their ability to apply analyze and to solve problems. Open questions are, therefore, more demanding both for learners and for teachers. Teachers must be very careful when marking open questions that they do not mark them subjectively but assess their worth/quality against objective criteria and/or standards.

EXAMPLES OF OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS

Examples of *closed questions* would be:

- What is 2X2?
- Who is the current president of South Africa?
- Name the nine provinces in South Africa.

Examples of *open questions* would be:

- What, in your opinion, is the most appropriate solution to unemployment in South Africa?
- How would you go about finding money to start your own small business?
- Do you think that C2005 is appropriate for school learning in South Africa? Give reasons for your answer.

You will note that closed questions are aimed at assessing learners' knowledge while open questions are aimed at assessing their understanding and their ability to apply analyze and to solve problems. Open questions are, therefore, more demanding both for learners and for teachers. Teachers must be very careful when marking open questions that they do not mark them subjectively but assess their worth/quality against objective criteria and/or standards.

6) *Essay type questions* are probably the most demanding types of paper and pencil tests because they assess learners' ability across the whole of Bloom's Taxonomy. Essays are aimed at assessing learners' ability to synthesize (create their own texts), but, in order to do so, learners have to know, understand and be able to apply what they have learnt in order to create this text. In argumentative essays they also have to demonstrate their ability to think critically and logically.

Essay questions must be formulated very carefully to ensure that they do not lead learners to a specific answer while, at the same, time give them enough information to ensure that they do not misunderstand the

question. It is always a good idea when giving essay questions to go through the following steps: Formulate the questions; Compile a checklist or rubric that you will use to assess learners' answers (without giving away the answers), and include the criteria in the test paper so that learners will know exactly what you will focus on while you are marking their essays.

EXAMPLES OF ESSAY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1
Consider the problem below and then describe the steps you would follow to solve this problem. You will be assessed on your ability to:

- Clearly formulate the problem in your own words
- Identify the probable causes of the problem
- List a number of alternative solutions
- Spell out the consequences of each alternative
- Select or generate the most appropriate solution
- Justify your choice.

QUESTION 2
A renowned Shakespearean critic and political analyst once made the claim that Macbeth is the epitome of the power-hungry ruler. Informed by your knowledge and understanding of the play, *'Macbeth'*, construct an argument in which you either support or refute this statement. Your essay should show evidence of:

- Your knowledge of the play
- Your understanding of the main character, Macbeth
- Your ability to construct a sound argument
- Your ability to express yourself in clear and appropriate language
- Your ability to construct a coherent and cohesive text.

7) In **performance assessments** learners are assessed while they are demonstrating or doing something – singing, cooking, debating, setting up an experiment, etc. Assessors, observing the performance, could make a holistic judgement of learner competence based on the performance itself and/or the thinking informing the performance or they could use a checklist/rubric against which the performance is assessed. Assessors could even conduct interviews with learners after the performance to find out why they did what they did in the way they did. In outcomes-based assessments these checklists/rubrics should be given to learners prior to the assessment event so that they can prepare their performance in terms of the stipulated criteria. The primary purpose in performance assessments is to determine whether or not learners have mastered specific skills and there are many opportunities for school learners to demonstrate their skills by means of performance assessments. Examples include learners preparing meals or baking cakes in Home Economics, setting up experiments in Physical Science, doing 'practical' work in Biology, taking part in debates in languages, playing a musical instrument in Arts and Culture, doing different exercises in gymnastics, and so forth. If you let your mind go you will be able to think of many other instances where performance assessment would be most appropriate and not too difficult to manage, provided that you have the

necessary infrastructure and personnel to conduct the assessments and ensure the safety of the learners.

As is the case with any other assessment, performance assessments must be aimed at assessing learner competence against a specific standard and/or set of assessment criteria. In designing performance assessments, teachers/assessors should, therefore, first decide what knowledge, skills, attitude, value, etc (as formulated in critical and/or specific outcomes) they want to assess and then design the performance assessment around these outcomes. Learners must then be provided with an instruction sheet that tells them what competence they will have to demonstrate; what criteria will be used to assess them, and what options they have regarding the way in which they want to 'demonstrate' their competence. They should also be told when and where the assessment will take place and who the assessors should be.

Performance assessment is hardly new. Teachers base most of their judgements of learner achievement on day-to-day observation of learners in action in the classroom. What is new is the concerted effort by many educationists to afford performance assessments a more central role in formal assessments. Many challenges – from the technical to the practical – accompany performance assessment, especially when assessments are used for large-scale high stakes purposes such as school graduation.

8) *Portfolio assessment* was traditionally associated with the assessment of artists and models, who would compile portfolios that include examples or photos of the kind of work they had done up to that time. Portfolios as a means of assessing school learning could be used to illustrate learners' best efforts or their progress towards satisfying assessment standards. Work included in portfolios should reflect competence in cognitive processes, affective responses and a range of skills related to the specific subject or learning area. Portfolios are very useful to parents, teachers and counselors because they help with the identification of learners' strengths and weaknesses and indicate where extra help or tuition may be needed. They also allow a teacher to evaluate his/her teaching effectiveness and, therefore, help him/her with future planning.

Portfolios should *not* be compiled by teachers but by learners themselves because, in selecting and organising the kind of work that they want assessors to judge, they are accepting some responsibility for their own learning/work and learning to accept the consequences of their choices. If, for example, they do not include sufficient evidence (enough examples) of their work the assessor cannot make a fair judgement of what they are worth and they will have to live with the consequences.

Text 6:   Rubrics

The word, *rubric*, derives from the Latin word for *red* - a rubric was the set of instructions for a law or liturgical service, typically written in red. Thus, a rubric instructs people on how to "lawfully" judge a performance. A good rubric allows valid and reliable—criterion-referenced—discrimination of performances.

Essentially a rubric is a printed set of guidelines that helps assessors to distinguish between achievements that differ in quality. The guidelines are formulated as descriptors (*standards* or *criteria*) that define/describe the elements (knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc) required *at different levels* of achievement (see Figure 7). The criteria are met or unmet on a continuum—from fully to incompletely.
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DESCRIPTOR	RATING	INDICATORS
Exemplary Response	6	Gives a complete response • with clear coherent and unambiguous explanation • includes a clear and simplified diagram • communicates effectively to the identified audience • *shows* understanding of the problems, mathematical ideas and processes; • identifies all the important elements of the problem • *may* include examples and counter-examples • presents strong supporting arguments
Satisfactory Response	4	Completes the problem satisfactorily • understands the underlying mathematical ideas; uses ideas effectively • the explanation *may be* muddled • argumentation may be incomplete • diagram *may be* inappropriate or unclean
Inadequate Response	1	Fails to complete the problem: • words used do not reflect the problem • drawings misrepresent the problem situation • stipulates that murder and rape are capital offences

Figure 7: Rubric for open-ended math problems

Many rubrics are holistic: they do not identify separate dimensions of performance. Instead, they assess performance as a whole. Holistic scoring might sacrifice validity and reliability for efficiency. Validity requires that we look for the right things—the apt and different dimensions of performance. Reliability is threatened if different judges unwittingly apply different criteria as they form an impressionistic whole judgement.

Consider a common problem in teacher grading. The student gets only one grade for a subject. We do not typically see the criteria or dimensions of performance that are involved in the grading. Johnny and Suzy both get a *B* for the year, but for vastly different reasons. In one case it relates to inconsistent test scores, in another, consistent scores but poor homework. No one except the teacher

knows the reasons for the grade—certainly not the reader of the transcript. The same teacher might give the students different grades at different times for varying reasons.

What happens if we use a vague, holistic rubric and each judge is then free to highlight different criteria? One math assessment judge is totally turned off by a student's computational errors; another sees them as minor, given the overall quality of the proof in response to a problem. Each judge is unknowingly applying different criteria. Unless the criteria specifically state a degree of computational accuracy and provide rubrics for how to weigh this factor in judging the overall quality of the problem, a judge can easily be distracted by obvious errors or achievements that may not be central to what is being assessed.

The more explicit the rubric is, the more consistent and reliable the scoring will be. Good rubrics define criteria and specify dimensions of performance, i.e. the category or aspect of a performance that is being assessed. One dimension to score in assessing writing, for example, is "*organization.*" The criteria for that dimension typically involve phrases like "there is a clear structure; the thesis is apparent and developed in a logical way; there is a beginning, a middle and an end with a conclusion. Sometimes an assessment that scores different dimensions separately is called an analytic-trait scoring process. For example, the dimensions we use to assess writing might be *ideas*, *organization*, *voice*, *word choice*, *sentence fluency* and *conventions*. In this case there would be a rubric for each dimension.

Assessors have to take great care to ensure that their rubrics are not only reliable but also valid. Suppose a rubric for judging story writing places exclusive emphasis on spelling and grammatical accuracy. The scores will likely be highly reliable—because it is easy to count the errors—but yield invalid inferences about students' ability to write stories, It is unlikely that spelling accuracy correlates with the ability to write an engaging, vivid, and coherent story. Many fine spellers can't construct engaging narratives, and no doubt many wonderful storytellers did poorly in school grammar and spelling tests.

Moderators should, in considering appropriateness and validity, consider not only the performance task, but also the rubric. Given the task and the capacities being assessed, are we focusing on the most apt criteria? Have we identified the most important and revealing dimensions of performance, given the criteria most suitable for such an outcome? Does the rubric provide an authentic and effective way of discriminating between performances? Are the descriptors for each level of performance sufficiently grounded in actual samples of performance of different quality? These and other questions lie at the heart of rubric construction.

A rubric should always detail better and worse in tangible, qualitative terms. What specifically makes this argument or proof better than another one? If you use comparative language to differentiate quality, make sure that what is being compared is relative quality, not relative, arbitrary quantity.

Compare the following excerpts from the ACTFL guidelines (Figure 8) and a social studies rubric (Figure 9) to see the point. The ACTFL rubric is rich in *descriptive language* and provides insight into each level and its uniqueness. The social studies rubric never gets beyond *comparative language* for the dimensions being

assessed. In the social studies rubric note that the only difference between each score point is a change in one adjective.

NOVICE–HIGH

- Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances
- Ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae.
- Most utterances are telegraphic, arid errors often occur *when word* endings and verbs are omitted or confused
- Speech is characterized by enumeration, rather than by sentences.
- There is some concept *of* the present tense *forms of* regular verbs and *some* common irregular verbs.
- There is some use *of* articles, indicating a concept of gender, although mistakes are constant and numerous.

INTERMEDIATE–HIGH

- Able to satisfy most survival needs *and* limited social demands.
- Developing flexibility it, language production although fluency is still uneven.
- Can initiate *and sustain a* general conversation on factual topics *beyond* basic survival needs.
- Can give autobiographical information.
- Can sporadically, although not consistently, give simple directions *and* narration of present past and future events.
- Limited vocabulary range and insufficient control of grammar lead to much hesitation *and* inaccuracy
- Can control the present tense of most regular and irregular verbs
- Comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, but still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by general public.

Figure 8: From the ACTFL Spanish Proficiency Guidelines

SCORE	SCORING DESCRIPTORS
5	The examples or case studies selected are exceptional, relevant, accurate and comprehensively developed, revealing a mature and insightful understanding *of* social studies content
4	The examples or case studies selected are proficient, relevant, accurate and clearly developed, revealing a *solid* understanding of social studies content
3	The examples or case studies selected are satisfactory, relevant and adequately *developed* but may *contain* some factual errors. The development of the case studies/examples reveals an adequate understanding of social studies content.
2	The examples or cases selected, while limited are relevant, but vaguely or incompletely developed, and/or they contain inaccuracies. A restricted understanding of social studies is revealed,

1	The examples selected are relevant, but poor and a minimal attempt has been made to develop them, and/or the examples contain major errors revealing a lack of understanding of content.

Figure 9: From A Canadian Social Studies Essay Exam

Rubrics are valid, reliable and do not inhibit creativity, if they:

- Include a *scale* of possible points for scoring work on a continuum with high numbers assigned to the best performances. Scales typically use numbers from 4 to 8 as the top score and the numbers l or 0 for the lowest score.
- Include *descriptors* for each level of performance assessed,
- Are either *holistic or analytic*. If holistic, the rubric has only one general descriptor for the performance as a whole. If analytic, there are multiple descriptors corresponding to each dimension of performance or trait being scored.
- Use *descriptors* that are valid and reliable and language that maximally *describes* each level of performance and its most salient and defining characteristics.
- Are *criterion-referenced*, with the highest point on the scale describing exemplary performance as derived from samples of genuine excellence.
- Are enough levels on the scale to enable assessors to discriminate but not so many that it becomes unmanageable. An even number of levels is better than an odd number because it forces more care in the judging.
- Ensure that the variation between descriptors of each point on the scale represent a smooth continuum.
- Are task-specific, clear and simple since this enhances validity and reliability

Sometimes rubrics can constrain performer imagination. Because some designers seem intent on creating rubrics by bland consensus, they may avoid controversial or difficult-to-assess characteristics of performance. Look at the rubric from NAEP in Figure 10. Note that one could write the most boring, un-interesting story in the world and still get a 6 if it fit the formula asked for by the rubric.

1. *Event Description.* Paper is list of sentences minimally related or a list of sentences that all describe a single event.

2. *Undeveloped Story.* Paper is a listing of related events. More than one event is described, but with few details about setting, characters, or the events. (Usually there is no more than one sentence telling about each event.)

3. *Basic Story.* Paper describes a series of events, giving details (in at least two or three sentences) about some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals. or problems to be solved). But the story lacks cohesion because of problems with syntax, sequencing, events missing, or an undeveloped ending.

4. *Extended Story.* Paper describes a sequence of episodes, including details about most story elements (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, problems to be solved). But the stories are confusing or incomplete (i.e., at the end the characters' goals are ignored or problems are inadequately

resolved: the beginning does not match the rest of the story: the internal logic or plausibility of characters' actions is not maintained).

5. *Developed Story.* Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are clearly developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved) with a simple resolution of these goals or problems at the end. May have one or two problems or include too much detail.

6. *Elaborated Story.* Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are well developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters goals, or problems to be solved). The resolution of the goals or problems at the end is elaborated. The events are presented and elaborated in a cohesive way.

Figure 10: Writing Rubric

Text 7: Standards and quality education

What is quality?

According to Harvey and Green (1993), there are essentially five broad notions of quality, namely, quality as something that is *exceptional*, something that is *perfect*, something that is *fit for purpose*, something that gives one *value for money* or something that *stimulates transformation*.

In terms of the

- *Exceptional view*, quality is seen as something really special, distinctive, and, except in extraordinary circumstances, unattainable
- *Perfectionist view*, quality is seen as something that is flawless, without any faults, something that everybody strives for and sometimes achieves
- *Fitness for purpose* view, quality is seen as the extent to which actions are aligned to purpose, or the extent to which they are 'just right' for something or somebody
- *Value for money* view, quality is seen in terms of a 'return on an investment', i.e. whether or not the result/outcomes of a particular action or activity warranted/was worth the effort put into the action/activity
- *Transformation* view, quality is equated with flexibility, i.e. the ability to adjust to circumstances and/or to adjust the circumstances themselves, should this be necessary

What are standards?

Simplistically put, standards are those things we put in place to *measure or assess* quality. Standards could be rules, regulations, criteria, amounts, codes of conduct – you name it.

In *education*, standards are typically associated with three areas of activity, viz. academic performance, competence, and service.

- *Academic standards* specify the expected levels of academic achievement and/or performance, i.e. learners' ability to do what is required of them in specific programs of study or, in schooling, in specific learning areas or subjects and grades. Such standards typically specify the requisite *cognitive abilities*, i.e. what a person should know, understand, analyze and evaluate and to what extent s/he should be able to apply such cognitive skills to the solution of theoretical problems or imaginary situations.
- *Competence standards* specify what a person should be able to *do*, i.e. what skills or competencies s/he should demonstrate. Competencies might include skills required for the job market, skills required for induction into a profession, problem-solving skills, communication skills, as well as cognitive skills - like the ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate and extrapolate. Often, there is some overlap between academic and competence standards since the one may be implicit in the other.
- *Service standards* are usually associated with the service industries – restaurants, hotels, public service, etc. – and specify what constitutes 'good service'. We often hear, for example, that service in South Africa is 'horrendous', that nobody cares about quality, only about money. One service

standard aimed at addressing poor service in South Africa is the *Batho Pele* principle for civil servants. If you were to apply this standard to the way public servants treat some people, for example, would you rate their service to be of a high quality or not?

All these standards could be applied to education and training contexts: *academic standards* to what learners/educators should *know* and *understand*, *competence standards* to what they should be able to *do* with what they know, and *service standards* to how they should conduct/*behave* themselves. Service standards could also be applied to the way in which teaching and learning processes are *managed*, i.e. to turnaround times in assessments, to class sizes, punctuality, availability of resources, complaints procedures, etc.

Quality versus standards

The extent to which quality and standards are perceived as separate or interdependent entities depends on the notions of quality to which one subscribes.

According to Harvey and Green (1993):

- The *exceptional approach* to quality emphasizes the maintenance of *academic standards* through the assessment of knowledge, while *competence standards* emphasizes the assessment of *cognitive* skills only. It adoption presumes an implicit, normative, 'gold standard' which only exceptional learners would be able to achieve. In this sense, it continues to advocate elitism, even in a public or mass education system. It presumes, moreover, that *service standards* are dependent on well-qualified staff, well-stocked libraries, well-equipped laboratories, and students who are willing and able to learn.
- The *perfection approach* emphasizes *consistency* in external quality monitoring procedures related to academic, competence and service standards. It values a defect-free or faultless process, informed by the assumption that this will produce high quality outputs/results. Because of this emphasis quality is highly dependent on effective and efficient administrative systems and step-by-step procedures that will eliminate mistakes.
- The *fitness-for-purpose approach* relates its standards to specified purpose-related objectives. In theory, therefore, it requires assessment that is criterion-referenced but its purpose/goals – as contained in vision and mission statements – often include a comparative, norm-referenced component. In this approach professional competence is primarily assessed in terms of service standards set by the professional body concerned. In education these would include minimum standards for student support, teaching, learning, assessment, and student-lecturer interaction.
- The *value-for-money approach* emphasizes the value that 'customers' (learners, parents, teachers in the case of education) get from the system. Good standards, in this case, are equated with the maintenance and improvement of academic standards, resources, quality of teaching and learning, venues, etc. In terms of *service standards*, this approach prioritizes effectiveness, or goal attainment, and efficiency (good use of time and resources).
- The *transformation approach* uses standards to assess the extent to which students have been enriched (metaphorically) in terms of academic knowledge, cognitive skills and transformational values and attitudes. As

transformation focuses on development as well as competence, assessment needs to be both formative and summative. *Service standards* in this approach include specification about equity, transparency and availability to all regardless of difference.

Text 8: Agreement trialling

Agreement trials make an important contribution to consistent and valid assessment judgements amongst a number of assessors and could, therefore, be regarded as an investment in the development of sustained quality in assessment. They are held, in the first instance, to help assessors arrive at a basis from which they can conduct valid and reliable assessments. They are primarily aimed at the development of assessors' expertise, though the trials will typically be linked to moderation and/or verification processes. Trials are likely to be held locally – in schools, colleges or workplaces, normally with teachers or assessors from one institution, but occasionally from several institutions in the same area.

All those involved in agreement trials should be practitioners – assessors, and/or teachers performing the role of assessors in this case – in the subject, learning area and/or specific assessment area that is the focus of a specific trial/meeting. All the assessors/practitioners present should participate on an equal footing, whatever their status in the school or cluster of schools concerned. However, one of the participants should act as convenor, facilitator or chairperson and another as the secretary. It is important that discussions and, especially, decisions taken and/or agreements reached should be noted or recorded in the form of minutes and that these decisions/agreements should inform and/or direct subsequent assessment practice.

Agreement trials are organized and managed to suit assessors' own requirements, when the need arises, and involves a small number of assessors, usually not more than 5 or 6 at a time, all involved in conducting the same subject, learning area or grade. While the acceptable frequency of trials will depend primarily on the extent to which assessors need support in establishing and maintaining equitable standards, the demands of the subject or learning area concerned will also play a role. What is important, though, is that an agreements trial should under no circumstances be regarded as a once-off event; rather, there should be an ongoing program of well-focused, short trials. The duration of a trial is determined in part by the assessment area/s under consideration, by the evidence that needs to be studied, and by the experience of the assessors involved. Usually, sessions would last between 1 and 3 hours.

Agreement trials might be appropriate when:

- There is limited assessment experience amongst teachers
- It is clear that different assessors are making different judgements in relation to similar evidence
- There have been criticisms of the quality of assessment in your school
- People need to start thinking critically about assessment and the functions it serves
- There is a need to share expertise amongst staff
- Assessment issues have been neglected within the professional development programme

A systematic program of trials will seek to cover assessment requirements over a period of time. Discussions will usually focus on one or more aspects of

assessment – formative assessment, criterion-referenced assessment, assessment of a specific skill or subject topic, etc.

- *Pre-assessment discussions/trials* are aimed at assisting assessors to reach agreement or consensus on what should be assessed, how it should be done and what criteria should be used to judge learner achievement. It would not be unusual for teachers/assessors to bring the assessment instruments they had already designed to the pre-assessment trial with a view to adjusting them in line with fellow assessors' comments.
- *Post-assessment discussions/trials* would be devoted to the scrutiny of evidence generated by learners – completed essays, tests, or assignments, for example – to ensure that the rigor with which different assessors marked these is more or less the same.
- *Post-moderation trials* would occur after an internal or external moderator has reviewed assessment judgements. In this case, agreement trial discussions would typically focus on whether or not they should adjust their original marks/grades as suggested by moderators and/or on the comments and/or suggestions of moderators with a view to using them for the improvement of future assessments, if applicable.

Irrespective of whether the trial occurs pre- or post assessment, it will usually start with the leader/chairperson providing participants with a brief overview of the task to be undertaken, followed by some or other procedure aimed at determining what materials are available for trialling. The facilitator/chairperson would then invite an assessor briefly to describe the material/activity that has to be scrutinized, explain the context in which it was or will be used, the purpose it served/would serve, and the criteria against which evidence was or would be judged. This is an important part of the trialling because it ensures that the other assessor participants will consider the evidence presented in an informed way.

Once the assessor has made his/her presentation, the assessment instruments and/or assessment evidence, whichever is on trial, would be circulated to all present and they would be given the opportunity of studying and discussing it in terms of agreed upon criteria/element, for example:

- The aspects of competence/achievement that were or will be assessed
- The kinds of evidence that were or will be regarded as proof of achievement/competence
- Whether or not it served or would serve its intended purpose
- Whether or not it catered for individual learner needs (learning style, learning tempo, barriers to learning, etc.)
- Judgements on the quality of the instrument/interpretation of evidence and/or recommendations regarding adjustments and/or changes

At an appropriate point the leader/facilitator/chairperson will try to get participants to agree on judgements and/or recommendations. Where there are difficulties or irreconcilable difference in opinions, the scrutiny of further evidence may be necessary to reach agreement. The leader will also see to it that decisions are recorded and that arrangements are in place for ensuring that they are implemented.

Templates

This section of the module contains blank forms of the templates that were discussed in this module. You may feel free to copy or adapt these templates to suit your particular needs and circumstances.

TABLE 11: MODERATOR'S RPL CHECKLIST

Do you know and/or understand;?	Yes	No	Explain or give examples to justify your claim
What an outcomes-based system is?			
The reasons for the adoption of an outcomes-based system in SA?			
The NQF and how it contributes to accountability and quality assurance?			
The terminology/concepts used in OBE and quality assurance discourse?			
What assessment entails?			
What moderation entails?			
What the difference is between assessment and moderation?			
The principles that govern assessment and moderation?			
What assessment standards and criteria are and how to use them?			
When to use various assessment methods, e.g. observation, questioning, assignments, etc.?			
The differences in the kind of evidence that should be presented to demonstrate competence in different subjects/learning areas?			

TABLE 12: EVIDENCE CHECKLIST

Aspect to be moderated	Documents required	When required	Provider	Comments
Indicate here what the focus of the moderation process is, e.g. assessment process, assessment instruments, appeals procedures, etc.	*Indicate here exactly what written information the moderator will require in terms of the aspect listed in column 1.* *If, for example, the moderator is focusing on assessment instruments, s/he will need copies of the test/exam papers, assignment instructions, etc.*	*Indicate here by when the moderator will need the documentation.*	*Indicate who (person or capacity) has to provide the moderator with the required documentation*	*Use this column to monitor the collection and return of documentation.* *Also note here any problems or successes in this regard.*

TABLE 13: SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

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