The National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training

MODERATION HANDBOOK

Version 4

Prepared by the Standards & Assessment Development Unit, NCTVET
Gordon Town Road, Kingston 6
Jamaica, West Indies
Amendments

Please note that the following changes have been made to the previous version (Version 3) and are now reflected in the current version (version 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes:</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment made to Lead Moderator</td>
<td>Pg 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment made to Moderation Panels</td>
<td>Pg 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published by the Standards and Assessment Development Unit

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. ii
What is Moderation .................................................................................................................. 1
The Value of Moderation .......................................................................................................... 2
Principles of Moderation .......................................................................................................... 3
What will be moderated? ............................................................................................................ 6
Moderation Policy ...................................................................................................................... 7
Roles and Responsibilities ......................................................................................................... 7
Records and Reporting ............................................................................................................ 11
The Role of the Moderator ....................................................................................................... 12

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Moderation Action Plan .................................................................................. 14
Appendix 2 – Moderator Nomination Form ............................................................................. 15
Appendix 3 – Completed Assessment Cover Sheet ............................................................... 16
Appendix 4 – Guidelines for Completing Moderation Report ............................................. 17
Appendix 5 – Moderation Report ............................................................................................ 18
Appendix 6 - Moderation Checklist for Validation of Assessments ................................. ...17
INTRODUCTION

A national moderation ensures that assessment decisions made by Assessors and Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs) are consistent. The National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), in its role as Quality Manager, requires ATOs to participate in and/or conduct moderation activities. Quality management is the focal point of moderation activities and is crucial for the maintenance and credibility of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

NCTVET is committed to the continuous improvement of quality in the TVET System and encourages feedback to maintain the currency and relevance of the assessment system.

The Moderation Handbook provides information to Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs) and Assessors on the Moderation process.

Moderation seeks to encourage compliance with Clause 6.4, Section 6 of the NCTVET Accreditation Standards which states:

‘Strategies are implemented for ensuring that assessments are conducted within the established guidelines for final assessment and in keeping with the requirements of the certifying body and the special needs of clients.’
WHAT IS MODERATION

Moderation is a process to ensure that assessment decisions are consistent amongst Assessors and Accredited Training Organization (ATOs).

TYPES OF MODERATION

Internal Moderation:

- This level of moderation involves the moderation of Assessment Instrument and is an activity internal to the operation of ATO.

External Moderation:

- This level of moderation takes a national perspective of how assessment decisions and approaches are consistent among Assessors.
- This type of moderation is conducted by NCTVET and involves the contribution of ATOs, and Assessors.
- External Moderation is intended to ensure that quality of assessment activities is consistent nationally.
THE VALUE OF MODERATION

The aim of moderation of assessment is to ensure that:

- Assessments are consistent with the national competency standard
- Assessment tools are effective, efficient and can be implemented in a cost effective manner
- Assessments are fair and valid
- Assessors are making consistent judgments (reliability)
- Sufficient evidence is used to make decisions
- System improvement is ongoing

Moderation is the fourth step of the quality assurance process of the National Qualifications Framework.

The steps are as follows:
PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION

Sufficient evidence

Assessors must collect enough evidence to be confident that the learner/client has met all the requirements of the standard. The assessor needs sufficient evidence to ensure that the client/learner can repeat the required performance consistently.

Valid evidence

Evidence must match the requirements of the standard being assessed. If the learner/client is required to know certain information, it is not valid to consider their ability to write well or speak confidently as part of the assessment. It is the knowledge of the principles that is being assessed.

The method of assessment must also match what is being assessed, that is, assessing knowledge with a knowledge test; assessing performance with a skill test and action methods.
Reliable evidence

Evidence must consistently measure what it is supposed to measure. Highly reliable assessment methods should be designed so as to eliminate errors and can be used repeatedly in an unchanging situation to produce constant results.

Fair evidence

Learners/clients may be assessed against the same criteria in a variety of ways, but each must be treated fairly. They should not be hindered or assisted by factors irrelevant to the performance in question.

- Time constraints should not be imposed unless specified in the relevant standard.
- The time provided for the assessment should reflect the time the activity could take in a normal working environment.
- Performance should not be constrained by unfamiliar language or conditions, or poorly expressed instructions.
- Knowledge or understanding should not be masked by the demands of extended writing. For example, if a learner/client is required to demonstrate a task, it would be inappropriate to require them to write an essay about the task.
- Understanding of processes should not be hindered by lack of resources. For example, it can be appropriate for notes, texts or manuals to be made available, as these are normally available in the workplace.
- Legitimate responses that differ from the assessor’s expectation but match the evidence required should be accepted.
- Special needs should be accommodated where appropriate; however, disabilities that prevent learners/clients from performing as specified in standards should not be compensated for.
- Assessment should be free from bias arising from gender, cultural and ethnic factors. The assessor’s own behaviour can be critical here.
- All learners/clients may appeal the assessment procedures.
Consistent evidence

Assessors must make consistent decisions about learners’ competence. Another assessor considering the same evidence should make the same assessment decision based on similar evidence at different times, on different occasions.

Open assessment

The learner/client should know:

- What standard is being assessed?
- What evidence needs to be produced?
- How much evidence is required?
- When is the assessment to take place?

Managing assessment

Assessment should be done within the time, work patterns and resources available and there should be as little disruption as possible. This is considered ideal assessment practice.

Forms of evidence

Evidence that is produced as part of work and learning is considered the most direct form of evidence. Setting a special assessment activity may be required to support this evidence.
WHAT WILL BE MODERATED?

NCTVET is responsible for the moderation of all unit standards. It is not feasible to moderate all unit standards at once. NCTVET will adopt a mechanism that will allow for a selected sample of unit standards to be moderated each year.

1. Selection of the sample unit standards for each moderation period

   The NCTVET will select standards for moderation for the training cycle.

2. Evidence and documentation required

   Each ATO will be required to submit the following samples of assessment undertaken during the period against the selected unit standards:

   - All evidence and documentation for one example of assessment for which competency was granted at the first assessment.
   - All evidence and documentation for one example of assessment for which competency was granted at the first re-sit.
   - All evidence and documentation for at least one example of an assessment that resulted in a “not yet competent” decision being made.

   All evidence along with assessor’s comments appended to, or written on, should be retained and submitted for consideration in the moderation process. This information can often clarify the basis for the assessor’s decision.
MODERATION POLICY

1. Responsibility and central co-ordination

The NCTVET has the overall responsibility for the moderation system as a part of its obligation development and maintenance of standards; therefore it is responsible for the management and moderation of all assessments against these standards.

2. Use of submitted material

The material submitted is for moderation purposes only. All interactions and materials remain confidential to the ATOs and assessors concerned. The Lead Moderator will retain materials submitted to the Moderation Panel until he or she is satisfied that all the stages of the moderation cycle have been completed.

3. Moderation Activities

Moderations (external) will be scheduled and conducted by the NCTVET while internal moderations should be conducted by ATO.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the handbook outlines key aspects of the roles and responsibilities of the positions or groups which make up the moderation system.

1. Standards and Assessment Unit

The Standards and Assessment Unit is responsible for setting standards, assessment policies, developing assessment instruments and procedures to guide the TVET system. The Standards and Assessment unit:

- Uses the unit standards to design a related Moderation Action Plan (MAP) – (see Appendix 1).
• implements the moderation system through Lead Moderators

• collects suggestions for the review of the unit standards

• reviews the unit standards and moderation action plans as necessary, on the basis of information received from Accredited Training Organisations through the moderation process

• Review unit standards and assessment tools as a result of moderation findings.

2. **Lead Moderator**

The Lead Moderator who is a member of the Standards and Assessment Unit is assigned to co-ordinate the process for a round of moderations. This individual will be the officer assigned for standards development for that industry. The Lead Moderator:

• provides professional guidance and support to participants in moderation activities

• chairs National Moderation meeting

• maintains a record of unit standards moderated

• completes administrative functions relating to the national aspects of the moderation system

• ensures moderation activities are completed professionally

• completes documentation relating to Moderation Panel activities, and reports on moderation issues, including:
  
  i. outcomes of moderation activities

  ii. issues arising from moderation activities

  iii. new developments, requirements or recommendations

• Distribute the moderation report
3. **Moderation Panels**

The moderation panel will be made up of not more than six individuals:

- The Lead Moderator, from the Standard and Assessment Unit/the Standards Development Officer assigned to the industry being moderated.
- Three assessors from Accredited Training Organization (ATO)s,
- Where necessary a representative from the relevant sector and representatives from the industry.

Occasionally, this composition may vary based on resources and other needs.

The roles and responsibilities of the panel are to:

- carry out the moderation of assessments in accordance with the moderation guideline
- consider submitted/presented assessment evidence and supporting documentation
4. Accredited Training Organisations

Accredited Training Organisations (ATOs) are required to select an assessor to represent them on the Moderation Panel, and a moderation contact person to co-ordinate external moderation processes. The ATO will submit the name of its representative(s) to the Standards and Assessment Development Unit not later than one month prior to the start of the moderation cycle to enable members to be empanelled.

Additionally, ATOs are required to:

- enable an appointed representative to attend the moderation panel meeting as scheduled
- ensure that assessment activities and assessed work submitted to the moderation panel are representative of the work of the ATO's assessors/assessments
- have in place all internal systems that the ATO undertook to set up when the application for accreditation was made to NCTVET. In particular, attention should be paid to the sections on internal moderation.
- ensure all documentation - assessment tasks, samples of assessed work and the appropriate forms - are submitted on time
- ensure that all information identifying the learner/client has been removed from material submitted for moderation in order to maintain confidentiality

5. Quality Assurance Unit

The Quality Assurance Unit receives moderation reports and takes appropriate action where necessary.
RECORDS AND REPORTING

The Lead Moderator will retain records of the moderation until the completion of that moderation cycle. Following each moderation activity undertaken by the moderation panel, the Lead Moderator will compile the moderation report. The Lead Moderator will submit the moderation report to the Standards and Assessment Development Unit. The report will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the moderation system and to identify changes required to enhance effectiveness.

The Standards and Assessment Development Unit will be responsible for executing follow up actions and remedies deemed necessary as a result of the moderation report. This may include:

- Making amendments to unit standards
- Making amendments to assessment instruments
- Making recommendations for the Moderation Guidelines
- Making recommendations for the Assessment Guidelines

Moderation does not change the assessment decisions/results of the learners already assessed.
THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

Moderators will be appointed and trained by NCTVET to assist in the moderation process. The workload will be spread over several submission dates when training organisations send in assessment schedules and samples of assessment evidence for moderation. The main focus is on how each assessor interprets the standard.

Moderators are responsible for checking assessment materials and assessor judgments to ensure consistency with the unit competency standard. The moderation process varies with each sector according to the number of training organisations assessing competence. All assessors may therefore be involved in the moderation process at some stage.

Key responsibilities

The moderator will:

- work with NCTVET standard and assessment unit to ensure consistent interpretation of the standards
- ensure that moderated assessment activities are consistent with national standards
- carry out review of samples of assessment evidence
- Check on the validity, reliability, sufficiency, and fairness of assessment tools

Working relationships

The moderator will report to, and liaise with, the Lead Moderator and work closely with all members of the Moderator Panel.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

**Moderation Action Plan**

Moderation Cycle: __________________  Evidence submission deadline: __________________

Industry: ______________________  Lead Moderator assigned: ______________________

**Unit(s) selected for moderation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</table>

Nominee forms of ATO’s moderation representatives to be received by: ____________________________

Moderation panel to be convened by (date): ___________________________________________________

Moderation activities to be conducted from ____________________________ to _______________________

Moderation report to be presented by (one month later) ________________________________________

*Please retain and submit all evidence of three samples of assessment for each of the units relevant to your institution by the deadline indicated. These samples should be representative of the assessments done at your institution. Each submission must be accompanied by a Completed Assessment Cover Sheet.*

To have any queries addressed, please contact the Lead Moderator prior to the submission deadline at:

The Standards & Assessment Development Unit, NCTVET,
Gordon Town Road, Kingston 6.
Telephone: 977-1700-5  Fax: 977-1115
e-mail: nqrMail@heart-nta.org
APPENDIX 2

**Moderator Nomination Form**

Industry/Sector: ________________________________________________________________

Occupation: ________________________________________________________________

Main field(s) of expertise: _______________________________________________________________

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Business address: ________________________________________________________________

Telephone Contact(s): ________________________________________________________________

Certification(s) held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Certification</th>
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</table>

Work experience (last five years). Please include freelance projects that are relevant to area to be moderated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Position held</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

Reference

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

**Declaration**

Should I be appointed as a Moderator, I promise to serve diligently on behalf of the industry and abide by the conditions of appointment. I further promise to treat with the strictest of confidence, any information or materials with which I may come in contact or entrusted to me during my tenure.

Nominee’s Signature ____________________ Date __________________

**For official use only**

Date received ______________ Approval ( ) Yes ( ) No
APPENDIX 3

Completed Assessment Cover Sheet

Unit Standard(s): ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

ATO: ___________________ Moderation cycle: ________________________________
Submission date: ___________ Date received (internal use only): ________________

Candidate evidence:

Please attach samples of the candidate’s evidence for all assessment activities for the unit standard being moderated.

Include:

- one sample of assessed evidence from a candidate who has been deemed competent at the first assessment,
- one sample of assessed evidence from a candidate who has been deemed competent at the first re-sit, and
- one sample of assessed evidence from a candidate who has been deemed not yet competent

Remember to remove all personal information about the candidate prior to submitting evidence.

Comments to Moderation Panel (if required):

For integrated assessment, please indicate the codes of the units that were combined in the assessment within the comments section above.

ATO Moderation Co-ordinator: ______________________________ Signature: ________________
APPENDIX 4

Guidelines for Completing the Moderation Report

Be sure to consider all aspects of the moderation exercise. Use clear and precise language to minimise ambiguities. Do not mention individual learners or staff by name. Please type and date the report. The report will be sent to persons or institutions on the distribution list. The original report should be presented to the NCTVET within one month of the final moderation meeting.

The following are some areas that may be included in the report.

1. **Units sampled**
   - State which units were sampled and indicate the reasons for selecting them.

2. **Delivery and management of the programme**
   - Comment on documentation of the assessment process by assessors at the ATO.

3. **Suitability of the assigned task**
   - Was the assigned task(s) suitable for generating evidence for the given unit(s) of competency?

4. **Sufficiency of evidence**
   - Was the evidence sufficient to determine judgement of competency?

5. **The general conduct of assessment**
   - Comment on the performance of assessors in relationship to units of competencies assessed within and across institutions.

6. **Adjustment to standard/assessment instruments**
   - Is there any suggested change to the standards/assessment instruments as a result of the moderation?

7. **Any other comments**

8. **Recommendations**
## APPENDIX 5

### Moderation Report

**Industry/Sector**

**Moderation period:**

**Submission date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List unit competencies selected for moderation</th>
<th>Reason for selection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments/Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Are the learners from the target groups listed in the standards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>B Is the evidence of competency consistent with those recommended in the standards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>C Are the records of the learners’ work properly maintained?</td>
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<tr>
<td>D Are the performance criteria proving adequate in practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>E Are the criteria for different levels clear to you as a moderator?</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Are the criteria for the different levels clear to the facilitators/learners?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Moderation Checklist for Validation of Assessments

(Adapted from Clayton et al Maximising Confidence in Assessment Decision-making. A resource to assist assessors to maintain the quality of their assessment systems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALIDITY - Assessment should cover the range of skills and knowledge necessary to demonstrate competency.</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The assessment tasks are based on realistic workplace activities, contexts and current.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The evidence relates directly to the unit of competence.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The instrument will assess the candidate’s ability to meet the performance criteria for this unit of competency.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The assessment tasks have been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. More than one task and source of evidence will be used as the basis for judgement.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evidence is drawn from a variety of performances over time where practical.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Different sources of evidence of knowledge and skills that are underpinning for this unit of competency will be considered in the assessment.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The purpose, boundaries and limitations of the interpretations of evidence have been clearly identified.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The methods and instruments selected are appropriate for the industry sector and meet approved current industry standards.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Where practical, the methods and processes for assessment have been validated by another person with expertise in the competencies being assessed.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RELIABILITY**

Reliability is the consistency with which an assessment method measures what it is supposed to measure. Highly reliable assessment methods are designed so as to eliminate all possible errors and as such can be used repeatedly in an unchanging situation to produce constant results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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</table>

1. Critical aspects of evidence have been identified, and assessed.  
2. Assessors have prepared assessment exemplars, checklists, and sample answers.  
3. The assessment tools for observing and recording evidence are based on the unit of competency.  
4. Clear guidelines are available from the ATO to ensure that assessors make consistent decisions over time and with different candidates.  
5. Consistent instructions to candidates and procedures for undertaking assessment are available to all assessors from ATO’s.  
6. Where work samples are to be used as evidence, candidates will receive specific guidelines on requirements, including information about ensuring authenticity and currency of the evidence.  
7. Where a unit or units of competency are to be assessed in different situations, the situations are generally comparable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLEXIBILITY</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment should cover both on- and off-the job components of training. Assessment procedures should be relevant for the recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The assessment approach was adapted to meet the needs of all candidates and workplaces.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Where practical and appropriate, assessment/evidence was negotiated and agreed between the assessor and the candidate.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Candidates were able to have their previous experience or expertise recognised.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The assessment strategy adequately covered both the on- and off-the-job components of the training.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAIRNESS</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment procedures and criteria for judging performance must be clear to all learners seeking assessment.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The assessment tool has a process for customisation of the assessment, which was negotiated with candidates to meet any special needs.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The assessment approach chosen catered for the language, literacy and numeracy needs of all candidates.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reasonable adjustment was made to the assessment strategy to ensure equity for all candidates, while maintaining the integrity of the assessment outcomes.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
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</table>
# General review of Assessment Tool by Moderation Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Activity</th>
<th>Yes/ No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Tool instructions and assessment conditions are clearly identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written and oral information is worded clearly and simply in accordance with Industry standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment activity addresses the evidence requirements for the competency, including the range of variables, the dimensions of competency and the critical aspects of evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The level of complexity of the assessment tool is appropriate for the NQF level of the Unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A range of assessment methods appropriate for the Unit is available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the assessment tool user friendly, for assessors to gather appropriate evidence to make a judgement?</td>
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<td>Marking Guides meet current Industry standards, and can be validated against assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample student assessment met evidence requirements.</td>
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Lead Moderator’s Name: __________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: _____________