

# STANDARD FOR WITHIN-PROVIDER WITHIN-COURSE COMPARABILITY OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Schools and colleges intending to deliver courses accredited by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC) are required to register with TASC. Where they intend to deliver Level 3 and/or 4 courses they must also confirm at the time of registration that they have processes for ensuring comparability of learner results within their organisation.

Where Level 3 and/or 4 courses have both an internal and external assessment component, providers are responsible for the within-provider within-course comparability of the internal assessment results.

Internal assessments are determined, finalised and lodged with TASC before any external results are available. All the required evidence for internal assessment must have been collected before learners undertake external examinations or before external marking is completed. Any queries that learners have about their internal assessments must therefore be resolved by the provider before the results are finalised and lodged with TASC.

This document specifies the requirements for the documented procedure providers must have for effective within-provider within-course comparability of internal assessment results. The documented procedure must be retained by the provider and be available for scrutiny by TASC upon request.

Attached to this document are some examples to illustrate good practice in a range of circumstances. This standard is set under Section 33 of the *Office of Tasmanian, Assessment, Standards and Certification Act 2003*, which gives TASC the power to set or adopt standards for provision or assessment of accredited senior secondary courses and to require that course providers must comply with these standards.

## SCOPE OF THE STANDARD

This standard relates to within-provider within-course comparability of internal assessment results for TASC accredited courses that combine internal and external assessment.

## OBJECTIVE

To ensure that there are documented and effective practices in place in schools and colleges that provide the level of within-provider within-course comparability of internal assessment awards required by considerations of fairness to learners.

## DEFINITIONS

Assessment is judging evidence of a learner's attainment of knowledge and skills against standards.

Internal assessment is assessment of learner achievement by a senior secondary course provider e.g. a school or college.

External assessment is assessment of learner achievement by TASC.

Within-provider within-course comparability – within each provider, learners with the same result in the same course have shown the same standard of work. This requires consistent interpretation of the standards over time and consistent recognition of performances that demonstrate those standards. Comparability applies whether the learners are in a single class or different classes and whether learner work is marked by the same assessor or different assessors.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The school/college principal is responsible for ensuring there is an effective and documented procedure that is implemented and reviewed.

## PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

The processes used to achieve within-provider comparability are developed by the provider. They may vary from one provider to another to take account of factors such as the number of assessors for each course and the assessment practices in place.

The processes are recorded as a documented procedure that is made available to relevant staff in the school/college.

## LEARNER REQUESTS FOR REVIEW

The procedure must include a method by which a learner can request a review of their internal assessment results and the steps that will be taken by the provider to undertake that review. The assessment review processes must be documented and transparent and include:

- how learners are made aware of the right to seek a review
- what the process is for a learner to seek a review
- how an independent assessment is made of the learner's work
- who makes the final decision and how this is communicated to the learner
- how long the process is likely to take
- what records of the process are maintained and for how long.

## RECORDS

The provider retains records of processes and outcomes sufficient to show what practices have been undertaken and the effectiveness of those practices on comparability of learner results. Records need to show not only that actions have taken place and decisions made, but also the evidence on which these actions and decisions were made. Providers will decide how records are retained and for how long (within any requirements set by or under legislation such as the State Archives Act). Records will include:

- the documented procedure
- records of relevant meetings
- records of any adjustments made to results
- records of learner requests for reviews and the actions of those reviews
- continuous improvements made to practices.

## MONITORING THAT IT IS WORKING

The procedure will include steps for monitoring both the processes and the outcomes of those processes. This will include checks of comparability of results awarded through methods such as self-assessments or internal audits.

## ATTACHMENT

### EXEMPLARS

#### EXAMPLE 1

A medium-sized secondary school has over 200 senior secondary learners studying around 12 TASC courses. Seven of these are Level 3 and 4 courses. There are multiple classes of many senior secondary courses. The school has an internal moderation process that relates to all the senior secondary courses. The moderation process has multiple aims including fairness of learners' results and comparability between assessors.

The moderation process is based on a documented procedure which outlines the following processes.

1. Teachers of the senior secondary courses have formal quarterly meetings.
2. At these meetings teachers validate assessment instruments against course requirements and decide the conditions of assessment, particularly the amount of assistance to be provided for project/folio work and the methods of authenticating learner work. Where there are multiple classes of a course, the teachers of these classes work together.
3. While teachers develop many of their own formative assessment tools, those major tools used to determine final results are validated by the relevant group and mandated for use. They are reviewed each year.
4. Across all the senior secondary subjects teachers decide in which courses internal moderation based on samples of learner work will apply. For these courses teachers decide what learner evidence will be collected and how many samples of bodies of work will be considered. For the courses with external assessment this will include work from the mid year exams and identified course work.
5. At an October meeting of the teachers, the samples of bodies of learner work are laid on the table. Each teacher participating is required to have considered the work and undertaken at least a preliminary marking of it.
6. At the meeting a best fit is made as to who can comment – teachers of other classes of the same course, some previous experience in delivering the course, common criteria. Usually a range of practices is used – collaborative marking, double marking (where the first mark is known), blind marking (where the first mark is not known).
7. At the end of this meeting or at the next meeting, each teacher provides a report of the moderation activities in relation to their course. The principal is present at this meeting. There is a standard format for the report which includes:
  - o how many bodies of work considered
  - o the indicative marks/grades the teacher had assigned
  - o the nature of the discussion at the moderation meeting
  - o any re-consideration undertaken by the teacher.
8. Before the final assessment results are determined, senior secondary learners are given a form which tells them of any outstanding assessment work they have yet to hand in and requires them to sign the form agreeing that this is in fact the case and also that they have had all the 'special consideration' they can justify. These signed forms are held by the school in the learner folders.
9. Learners have the right to ask for a review of their assessment results by filling in a simple form that they get from the front office. This goes to the principal who asks the original assessor and one other selected by the principal to re- look at the learner's work.

## EXAMPLE 2

This is a large senior secondary college with around 1400 learners across 5 campuses.

The college has a high level documented procedure called Validation of Assessment. Under this procedure there are a range of processes:

### Structural

- A senior assessment team is responsible for the quality of assessment processes and outcomes right across the college.
- The senior assessment team appoints a 'moderator' for each course area.
- The college uses a variety of arrangements of assessor roles including:
  - separation of teacher and assessor, paired assessment, assessment panels.
- There is a professional development program with a strong focus on assessment practices, including marking and verification of results. The program includes mentoring for new teachers/assessors.
- The senior assessment team signs off on mandated assessment instruments for designated assessments.
- The college has a policy on the retention of an agreed sample of evidence of learner work – varying from course to course.
- There are both college-wide and subject area regular assessment meetings.
- There is a policy of learner-requested reviews of assessment results which includes options for re-assessment. This policy is overseen by the senior assessment team.
- There are processes for feedback to assessors from assessor meetings, moderation activities, reviews of results.
- The college liaises with other providers about a range of delivery matters including assessment practices.

### Validation of Assessment Materials and Methods

- The senior assessment team produces validated, standardised assessment instruments – including agreed marking schemes – used for designated assessments for designated courses.
- The senior assessment team specifies that there will be set assessment tasks in designated course areas.
- There are guidelines on internal assessment conditions including matters such as supervision, authentication, number of re-drafts, amount of assistance provided, time taken.
- The guidelines include information on how to record marking decisions so that judgements can be reviewed by another person.

## Marking and Assessor Judgements

- The college assessment guidelines include information about marking.
- For new courses the college undertakes trial marking exercises to enable comparison of marking standards.
- As part of the assessment process, teachers select and retain samples of bodies of learner evidence at the various award levels.
- The college encourages shared marking, collaborative marking, panel marking.
- Each course area decides on, and implements moderation activities. This could include: moderation of marks against a specimen assessment, double marking (first mark is known), blind second marking (first mark not known). As a minimum this is of the selected samples of bodies of work. It can include all learner work for a particular assessment activity or for a particular course. These activities take place annually on a whole-of-college level. Electronic exchange of information and tele- and video-conferencing are often used. Each course delivery team produces a report to the senior assessment team on the outcomes of its validation activities. This must include statements about reviews of decisions based on feedback from the moderation activities.
- The senior assessment team monitors the effectiveness of the procedure by undertaking an internal audit of the comparability of results awarded. To do this they select a sample of the retained bodies of work, have them re-marked and retain a record of the discrepancy of original to re-marked results. The senior assessment team has set a benchmark of tolerable discrepancy and plots this for each course and the whole college over time.

### EXAMPLE 3

A small secondary school delivers one TASC level 3 accredited course.

The school has a whole-of-school procedure on assessment which covers:

- the principles of assessment
- the rules of evidence
- types of assessment instruments
- conduct of assessment
- standards and marking
- record keeping
- validity of assessment results.

The one teacher of the senior secondary course works in conjunction with another teacher who teaches the year 10 subject most closely related to the TASC accredited course. This means that they work together to check that assessment instruments used by each of them meet the requirements of the courses they teach and they collaborate on marking learner work.

As well, the teacher of the TASC accredited course is part of a local network and she uses this network to benchmark her assessment practices. Every opportunity is taken to look at examples of learner work from other providers and discuss standards and awards. Electronic communication is used as well as face-to-face meetings and exchange of documents. The teacher is supported by her school to work with other providers of the course she delivers.

All learners are entitled to seek a review of their assessment results. There is a straight-forward form at the reception area that must be filled in. It can be given to any number of school personnel including the class teacher, the principal, the front office person. All such requests must be brought to the attention of the principal. The principal will request the course assessor review the learner work. Learners can be re-assessed if there is not sufficient work retained by them or the class teacher to enable a complete review. The principal will appoint a second teacher to oversee the review – this may be the principal.

There are regular staff meetings where assessment practices are often discussed.



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