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## Moderation and Variation

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### Purpose

Course [assessment](#) methods are approved and reviewed as part of the [University's](#) program approval process. This section of the Manual describes the principles and procedures that underpin moderation and variation of course assessment methods.

### Relevant to

- All courses offered as part of:
  - an enabling program
  - an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program
  - single and cross-institutional courses
  - Open Universities Australia (OUA) units delivered by UniSA
- Students eligible for variations or alternative arrangements to assessment methods. This includes students with disabilities, Indigenous students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and students who provide evidence of medical, compassionate, [religious observance](#) or [community service](#) grounds.

### Cross-references

- A-35A: Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements
- A-42: Honours Programs
- A-49: Postgraduate Coursework Degrees with a significant research component
- C-7: Students with disabilities
- Coursework Program Approval Manual and associated guidelines

## 3.1 Moderation of assessment

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- 3.1.1 Processes which assure high quality assessment practices, including external benchmarking, are an important part of the University's quality assurance framework.
- 3.1.2 Divisions will determine their own approaches to moderation.
- 3.1.3 Each school within a division will document a systematic approach to moderation which specifies:
  - a. the courses to undergo moderation
  - b. the rationale for the selection of these courses
  - c. the processes involved, and
  - d. the timetable for completion.
- 3.1.4 Moderation will include:
  - a. a review of assessment tasks, including [examination](#) questions, in relation to course objectives
  - b. a review of marking criteria
  - c. consideration of student workload, and
  - d. blind marking of a cross-section of assessment tasks and examination scripts.
- 3.1.5 Details of this moderation activity will also be specified in the program approval documentation.

## **3.2 Variations to assessment**

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- 3.2.1 Assessment methods, tasks and timelines must be specified in the course information booklet and distributed to students by the first class of the course. It is expected that these details will only change where necessary for the integrity of assessment, or due to unforeseen factors such as staff illness. [Course Coordinators](#) will be responsible for discussing proposed changes with students who are enrolled in the course, and must make every attempt to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the changes, and that disruption is kept to a minimum. Students must be notified in writing of any changes. The online version of the booklet must also be updated.
- 3.2.2 It is expected that a student will complete the assessment requirements for a course within the relevant [study period](#), unless they qualify for a variation due to:
- [special consideration](#)
  - supplementary assessment (including examination)
  - [deferred assessment](#) (including examination)
  - a delay in the marking of the final assessment (see clause 8.2.4), or
  - the provisions set out in the student's Disability Access Plan (see clause 3.2.5).
- 3.2.3 Students may request a variation to assessment methods, tasks and timelines based on medical, compassionate or religious observance grounds, or community service (eg elite athletes, jury duty, Defence Forces leave).
- 3.2.4 If students are aware of circumstances for which they will require a variation to assessment, they must lodge their request with the Course Coordinator within the first two weeks of the course (or equivalent for accelerated or intensive teaching). Variations which are required due to unexpected or exceptional circumstances should be discussed with the Course Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.2.5 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy C-7: [Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning Connection disability service, or UniSA partner administration office, as applicable.

## **3.3 Variations to examinations**

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- 3.3.1 The following students are entitled to the variations specified under clause 3.3.2, unless the course information booklet specifies that no variations are available:
- Indigenous students
  - students of non-English speaking background (NESB students) who were:
    - born outside Australia
    - arrived in Australia less than ten years previously, and
    - speak a language other than English at home
  - mature age students (ie 21 years or over at the time of admission to the program) who speak a language other than English at home, and
  - transnational students of non-English speaking background where the language spoken at home is not English, and the medium of instruction is English.
- 3.3.2 Students who meet the eligibility criteria above will be entitled to the following provisions, unless the course information booklet specifies that no variations are available:
- extra time to be used for reading or writing. This will normally be an extra ten minutes per hour for every hour of standard examination time, and

- b. the use of an [English language print dictionary](#) (not annotated) for Indigenous students, or
  - c. the use of a [bilingual print dictionary](#) (not annotated) for students identified in clause 3.3.1 b, c or d above.
- 3.3.3 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy C-7: [Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan, that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning Connection disability service, or UniSA partner administration office, as applicable.
- 3.3.4 Where additional materials or resources are allowed as a variation to examination procedures, these materials must not be enhanced or tampered with in any way that provides an additional advantage to the student. For example, if a student is allowed to take an English language print dictionary into the examination but other resources are not allowed, the dictionary must not have any additional notes or markings in it.
- 3.3.5 A student who is entitled to variations, as specified above, will have access to these variations for the duration of their program, unless they enrol in a course that specifies in the course information booklet that an alternative arrangement is in place, or that there are no variations available.
- 3.3.6 Data which is collected during enrolment and held on the student record system will identify students in one of the categories above. Academic staff are not required to make decisions on a case-by-case basis regarding eligibility for variations to examinations.

#### **3.4 Extension to assessment task deadlines**

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- 3.4.1 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual assessment tasks may be granted on medical or compassionate grounds, or other special circumstances (see clause 7.8)
- 3.4.2 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual assessment tasks will be granted to externally enrolled students due to late dispatch of course materials, providing the student enrolled in the course prior to the commencement of the study period.
- 3.4.3 Applications for an extension must be lodged in writing with the Course Coordinator before the due date for the assessment task and must be supported, where appropriate, by documentary evidence. The Course Coordinator will respond in writing, normally within two working days, and will keep a copy of the correspondence.