

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF OFFSHORE TEACHING AND LEARNING: GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Last Updated	
Date of Review	
Related Documents	<p>Relevant Partner Handbook</p> <p>Offshore Programs Agreement, Program and Quality Schedules</p> <p>Offshore Partner Academic Staff Introduction to Teaching at UniSA Process</p> <p>Quality assurance and improvement: Programs, courses and teaching arrangements policy</p> <p>Offshore Quality Framework</p> <p>Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual</p>

The aim of these guidelines is to provide staff with a framework and a set of communication and quality assurance and control procedures that will support their interaction with UniSA’s partners engaged in the delivery of UniSA programs and courses offshore.

BACKGROUND

In its strategic action plan, *Crossing the Horizon*, UniSA committed to becoming a globally visible university with global reach and leverage. In pursuit of that goal, UniSA reassessed its approach to transnational education, and expanded its educational footprint across the Asia-Pacific through a series of partnerships with institutions in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China with a view to establishing high quality collaborative education.

Part of the reassessment of UniSA's transnational teaching involved the evaluation of previous approaches to program and course delivery. It was determined that future delivery models would adopt a collaborative approach to teaching and learning where the majority of teaching is undertaken by UniSA approved partner teaching staff. The principles underlying that approach, their implication for UniSA and partner staff roles and responsibilities, and recommended procedures for communication and quality assurance and control are set out below.

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING MODEL: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Teaching and learning in offshore UniSA programs is a partnership of shared responsibilities between the offshore partner and UniSA teaching staff. A partnership of shared responsibilities requires (1) clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities between UniSA and partner staff, (2) regular, constructive and respectful communication between UniSA staff and partner staff, and a (3) shared commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.
2. Primary teaching delivery will be undertaken by UniSA approved partner staff, which in some cases may be supplemented by teaching undertaken by UniSA staff.
3. All partner staff will participate in UniSA's academic induction processes.
4. As negotiated between the parties, UniSA teaching staff will participate in regular visits to partner institutions to engage in discussions with partner staff about teaching and assessment issues, to model teaching and required standards through interaction with offshore students, to engender a sense of offshore student belonging at UniSA, and to promote studying onshore at UniSA.
5. As negotiated between the parties, UniSA will provide key partner staff with internship/immersion opportunities at onshore UniSA campuses. UniSA staff will ensure that partner staff are welcomed and appropriately supported during these visits.
6. Program objectives and learning outcomes in UniSA courses delivered onshore are the same as those delivered in offshore locations by partner institutions. Nevertheless, where appropriate, UniSA staff and partner staff should ensure that course material, teaching and learning activities and assessment are contextualised to meet the specific learning needs of UniSA's offshore students. Principles of parity, equivalence and comparability will underpin the contextualisation.
7. UniSA staff will set the assignments and examinations for all courses and provide marking guides or rubrics for partner staff except where alternative arrangements are specified in the partner agreement. In some courses, professional accreditation may require that assessment be set and graded by UniSA staff.
8. Offshore program and course quality and viability will be evaluated annually pursuant to UniSA's *Quality assurance and improvement: Programs, courses and teaching (A-35A)* policy. UniSA staff and partner staff will collaborate in the review of course and program content, pedagogy and assessment practice, and will implement appropriate improvements as required.
9. To assure that the same course learning outcomes and program objectives are achieved in both onshore and offshore locations, unless otherwise agreed by the academic director of the partner institution and by the Head of School, course assessment will be moderated

each time a course is delivered. See Section 3 of the University's *Assessment Procedures and Policies Manual (APPM)* for moderation requirements.

10. To assure the quality of curriculum design and assessment standards, offshore iterations of UniSA courses and programs will be included in UniSA external benchmarking processes.
11. Offshore students are UniSA students with access to student services and facilities as agreed. Whether UniSA or the partner institution will provide the relevant service, for example, counselling, library services, language and learning or disability support may vary according to each partner's agreement. However, all offshore UniSA students will have access to learnonline, student email, the Library and student administration systems to facilitate enrolment and graduation.
12. Offshore UniSA students are subject to the same policies and procedures that apply to onshore UniSA students including the *APPM*, the *Student Code of Conduct*, the *Recognition of Prior Learning* policy, and the *Student Complaints Resolution*.
13. Partner staff will also adhere to UniSA's policies and procedures insofar as they relate to the student experience, teaching and learning, and the quality assurance of programs and courses.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities for units and staff under the principles outlined above are as follows.

LEARNING AND TEACHING UNIT

The Learning and Teaching Unit will coordinate and deliver academic induction for all partner staff. Induction will occur prior to the commencement of the study period and thereafter annually or as required. Offshore teaching staff who are unable to attend face-to-face induction will complete an online version. However, the face-to-face induction is the preferred approach.

Upon appointment, UniSA staff must also participate in Teaching @ UniSA workshops and other UniSA, Division and School based induction processes.

LIBRARY

The Library will provide induction for all partner staff regarding UniSA library resources and services. Induction will occur prior to the commencement of the study period and thereafter annually or as required. The Library will provide ongoing advice and services to partner staff and offshore students as required.

DEAN: TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Dean: Teaching and Learning will:

1. Monitor quality assurance data including myCourseExperience surveys, the University Student Experience Questionnaire, and program exit surveys relevant to UniSA's offshore programs, identify any issues or trends that may need to be recognised and/or addressed and consult with UniSA program directors and course coordinators about those matters to devise and implement means to recognise or address them.

2. Monitor moderation reports and other data from program directors regarding academic standards in offshore UniSA programs and consult with UniSA program directors and course coordinators about issues or trends that may need to be addressed so as to devise and implement means to recognise or address them
3. Monitor feedback from relevant program stakeholders about program efficacy and attainment of program objectives and ensure that this feedback is taken into account by relevant UniSA and partner staff
4. Consult with the academic director of programs at the partner institution regarding the partner's program portfolio, program accreditation, program quality and viability, and the quality of the offshore student experience, and produce action improvement plans for approval by the Offshore Programs Steering Committee

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Head of Schools will:

1. Appoint UniSA staff to act as program directors and course coordinators for offshore programs and courses and manage their performance in those roles
2. Approve the appointment of offshore teaching staff
3. Facilitate and encourage communication between UniSA and partner teaching staff to ensure effective collaboration
4. Oversee offshore moderation (see further below)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The program director will:

1. Monitor quality assurance data including myCourseExperience surveys, the University Student Experience Questionnaire, and program exit surveys relevant to the offshore program
2. Liaise with course coordinators regarding any issues or trends that might be identified in the data above or in course moderation reports and, in consultation with relevant parties (e.g. Dean Teaching and Learning; Heads of School; Manager Offshore Programs) devise means to address those issues or trends

COURSE CO-ORDINATORS

University Course Co-ordinator	Partner Course Co-ordinator
<p>Pre - Study Period</p>	
<p>Prepare and supply all teaching materials</p> <p>Set up course website.</p> <p>Communicate about course planning (Email, phone, Skype)</p> <p>Prepare and supply assessment tasks and marking guides.</p>	<p>Communicate about course planning (Email, telephone, Skype)</p>
<p>During Study Period</p>	
<p>Sample and moderate assessment prior to mark release to students.</p> <p>“Pre-Moderation” (i.e. discussion about marking approach and standards).</p>	<p>Use course materials in week-to-week teaching. Maintain course discussion board. Co-ordinate other teaching staff.</p> <p>“Pre-Moderation” (i.e. discussion about marking approach and standards.)</p> <p>Mark and provide student feedback.</p>
<p>End of Study Period</p>	
<p>Prepare final exam and marking guides.</p> <p>If UniSA marking required (e.g. CPA required curriculum), mark exams.</p> <p>If UniSA marking not required, moderate exams, prepare moderation report and send moderation report to partner CC</p> <p>Discuss moderation report with partner staff</p> <p>Liaise with Head of School or Senior Partner Staff if required in relation to the moderation</p>	<p>If UniSA not required to undertake marking, mark exams and enter results onto the Grade Roster</p> <p>Provide feedback to students.</p> <p>Discuss moderation report with UniSA staff</p> <p>Discuss marginal students, deferred and supplementary assessment.</p>

report

Finalise grades in UniSA system for approval.

Discuss marginal students, deferred and supplementary assessment.

Assist in preparation of student feedback.

Provide Student feedback.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Consistent with UniSA's *Student Complaints Resolution*, complaints about program and course delivery or assessment administration should be raised in the first instance with partner staff responsible for course delivery. If the complaint cannot be resolved by partner staff it should be referred to the relevant UniSA course co-ordinator, or where appropriate, the relevant UniSA Head of School.

MODERATION

The primary purpose of moderating assessment items in offshore programs is to ensure that (1) the items are valid assessment instruments, and (2) the marks/grades awarded to an assessment item(s) by offshore partner academic staff are consistent with what would be expected if the item(s) had been marked by UniSA staff. The process must be consistent with the University's academic policies and procedures.

Although the final sign-off of the moderation process occurs via written report informed by appropriate sampling of student work to confirm marks/grades, successful moderation is the end point of a process involving a number of interrelated activities, some of which occur at the specific course level, and some at the program level.

Such activities will include:

- Effective communication (via email, phone, Skype) between UniSA course coordinators and partner academic staff, which must commence prior to and continue throughout the study period. Such communication needs to be generated by both parties to ensure effective and timely support, feedback and general flow of information.
- Provision of quality teaching and assessment materials developed by UniSA staff. This will assist partner staff to fully appreciate course objectives, and influence teaching approaches and content so as to best prepare students for demonstrating their learning through assessment tasks. It is essential that partner staff are equipped to mark assessments in line with the University's specific course requirements.
- Regular visits by the UniSA course coordinator/or nominee to meet with partner staff to model teaching and required standards through interaction with students. Such visits enable the development of collaborative relationships that promote open discussion of teaching and assessment.

- Appropriate sampling of each course group's assessment submissions prior to mark/ grade release to form a final opinion on the appropriateness of the marking approach and standard. As well as sampling post marking, some forms of sampling during the marking process are often appropriate. For example, the UniSA course coordinator/moderator marks a small sample of assessments as exemplars for further marking by the partner academic; the partner academic forwards a small selection of marked assessments for pre-moderation feedback to UniSA's course coordinator prior to marking the majority of assessments/exams;
- Completion and submission of a moderation report for auditing purposes on the approved template (**Appendix 1**).

Unless the assessment task cannot be submitted through Gradebook, all assessment earmarked for moderation will be accessed by UniSA and partner staff online via Gradebook.

It is important that moderation of marked assessment occurs each time a course is delivered until such time as it is recognised/approved by HOS/or nominee that the offshore teaching practices are of the required standard (note point 9 under General Principles). It is the responsibility of the University's course coordinator/moderator to highlight concerns around teaching and assessment practices directly with the Head of School or nominee, and Manager: Offshore Delivery to ensure these concerns are immediately addressed and resolved.

Moderation techniques employed, including appropriate sample size, will be chosen in the context of best practice and in accord with any applicable University policy, for example, see 3.1.3b (i, ii & iii) of the UniSA Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM). Approved UniSA Division Moderation Guidelines as to stratified sampling should also be taken into account.

Roles and responsibilities related to moderation

University Head of School or delegate¹

The role of the University's Head of School or delegate (a senior academic staff member) is to:

- Ensure that sufficient and appropriate resources are available for moderation to be carried out in accordance with these guidelines and the APPM.
- Ensure that all moderation processes are completed in a timely manner.
- Ensure a review of staff performance in marking and assessment are a feature of course and program reviews.

¹ UniSA Head of School (HOS) responsibility should only be delegated to a senior UniSA academic staff member such as a Discipline Leader, Program Director or Associate Head of School.

- Provide the offshore partner institution involved in the delivery of a course with individual course moderation reports, a brief summary of any related issues and actions taken to address them.

University Course Coordinator/Moderator²

The role of the University's course coordinator/moderator is to:

- Ensure offshore students and markers have access to assessment tasks, assessment guidelines (including assessment marking rubrics) and grade descriptions as outlined in section 8.5 of the APPM.
- Establish appropriate collaborative activities for all offshore partner staff who mark students' work to ensure fairness and reliability in judgements made about its quality. Refer to the General Guidelines section of this documentation for further information.
- Ensure that any issues raised by Partner Teaching Staff (hereafter 'offshore markers') about the course and its assessment practices are appropriately recorded and addressed.
- Prepare the moderation report using the University's approved template (**Appendix 1**). If the moderator identifies marking discrepancies in the majority of the papers then their report should include recommended actions. For example, remarking papers or scaling (an activity of last resort).
- Send a copy of the moderation report to the University's Head of School or delegate and the nominated administrative staff member in the University's offshore administration office. The University's Head of School or delegate will make the final decision on the marks awarded.
- At the conclusion of the moderation process, the University's course coordinator/moderator should consult the offshore markers to review the suitability of the assessment tasks, including exam questions, associated learning activities and marking criteria. They should also ensure that any issues identified are incorporated into the course review.

Offshore Marker (Partner Teaching Staff)

The role of the offshore marker is to:

- Fully understand the requirements of each assessment task and the course as a whole, including how each assessment task relates to course objectives and graduate qualities.
- Where appropriate provide feedback to the University's course coordinator/moderator regarding the appropriateness of assessment items and tasks.

² In the majority of cases, the course coordinator will also be the moderator.

- Mark assessment items and provide timely and constructive feedback to students in accordance with marking guidelines and template, and in relation to the requirements of the University's APPM (section 1.4).
- Following moderation, and in communication with the University's course coordinator/moderator, adjust marks on each student's assignment/exam (if required).
- Only release grades to students after receiving formal confirmation from the University's course coordinator/moderator that the moderation process has been satisfactorily completed.
- Provide feedback about the course and its assessment to the University course coordinator/moderator if necessary, and in a timely manner to ensure any issues requiring follow-up and/or action to be addressed from the moderation report.

Nominated professional staff member in the offshore administration office:

The role of the nominated professional staff member is to:

- Create and maintain a moderation tracking spreadsheet for each program.
- Forward a copy of the spreadsheet to the Partner Administration Office.
- Collate moderation reports for auditing purposes.

Partner Academic Faculty/Administration Office

- In cases where the assessment item is not submitted via "Gradebook" (a feature of learnonline, the University's learning management system or LMS), ensure secure delivery of scripts to the University within the agreed timelines.
- Ensure that sufficient and appropriate resources are available for those elements of the moderation process for which the offshore marker is responsible (*refer to Clause 5.5 of the Offshore Programs Agreement*).

Senior Partner Academic are to liaise with the Head of School or delegate and relevant UniSA and partner staff to address any issues that emerge in relation to the performance of markers.

Appendix 1 – Moderation Report Template



University of
South Australia

Moderation report

<Program Name>

Course Code	
Course Name	
Study Period	
Moderator Name	
Assessment being moderated (e.g. Assignment 2, Exam)	

No. of papers moderated	Action required (None/further moderation/re-mark etc)	General comment on quality of marking and feedback

Statement by UniSA Moderator

I confirm that I am satisfied with the actions taken from the above moderation process and I authorise the recording of grades for these pieces of assessment.

Date Prepared: / /

Moderator signature

Upon completion of moderation, submit the completed form to your Head of School with a copy to <nominated UniSA offshore administrative unit> and the offshore marker.

