

Building an Institutional Reporting Framework for Consensus Moderation Practices

Nicola D. Shapland

Griffith Institute for Higher Education
Griffith University

Duncan D. Nulty

Griffith Institute for Higher Education
Griffith University

This poster presents the initial findings from a two year Griffith University research project. The project entitled “*Developing consensus moderation practices to support comprehensive Quality Assurance of Assessment Standards*” is funded through a strategic Griffith Grant for Learning and Teaching, with ethical approval granted under reference number GIH/08/11/HREC. The poster describes the development of, and reports on the initial results from, applying a five level model of consensus moderation to assessment. Each level in the model describes a key stage in the assessment process, and a range of consensus moderation practices that would support quality assurance of assessment at that level. The reporting framework is imbedded in the University’s online Course Profile system and requires academics to report on their consensus moderation activities. Initial results confirmed this to be a meaningful reporting framework to gather and evaluate consensus moderation activities in use throughout the University.

Keywords: consensus moderation, reporting framework, quality assurance of assessment

Building a Consensus Moderation Reporting Framework

Qualitative in-depth interviews held with academics in the scoping phase of the project revealed that many are engaging in a range of moderation activities. The initial picture presented of a lack of consistent moderation practices was due in part to the lack of consistent language used; which in turn made identifying and reporting in a meaningful way impossible to date (Nulty 2011a). The development of a framework and common understanding throughout the academic community on the meaning of, and practices consistent with, consensus moderation of assessment was required. Building on Sadler’s work on moderation and quality assurance of achievement standards (Sadler 2009, 2010), a multi level model was developed to identify and describe the stages in the assessment process at which consensus moderation should apply (Nulty 2011b).

A mapping exercise was then undertaken to map consensus moderation practices identified in the scoping interviews with the different stages of the assessment process described in the model. This approach of identifying and categorising existing consensus moderation activities created a model that was acceptable and sustainable for academics. Academics ‘recognise’ moderation activities they already engage in, as well as being exposed to ideas to further develop their moderation practice. A five level consensus moderation model was finally approved and adopted by the University, supported by incorporation in the University’s Assessment Policy.

This consensus moderation model then provided the vehicle for constructing a meaningful reporting framework against which Schools and the University could report on the consensus moderation activities they use. The University’s online Course Profile system was the platform in which the reporting framework was imbedded. Course Convenors are required to complete and submit a Course Profile (the official and public University document) for each course, each semester. From Semester 1, 2011 the Course Profile document included a section on consensus moderation practice as part of its curriculum initiatives tracking system. Convenors are required to identify the consensus moderation practices used in their courses via ticking checkboxes next to descriptions of practice. The descriptions of moderation practices are consistent with and aligned to all five levels of the University’s approved Consensus Moderation Model.

Results

The reporting framework was first included in the Course Profile system for use in Semester 1, 2011. Data was able to be collected showing the % of academics that engaged in some form of moderation of assessment across each level of the University’s approved Consensus Moderation Model.

Table 1: The Use of Consensus Moderation Practices across 5 Levels of the Assessment Process

Consensus Moderation Level	% of Academic Use in Sem 1, 2011
Level 1: Course Level Assessment Planning	95.41
Level 2: Marking Student Work	92.25
Level 3: Grading Student Work	91.47
Level 4: Standards Across Courses	62.77
Level 5: Standards Over Time	71.73

Conclusion

The Institutional Reporting Framework for Consensus Moderation Practices allows data on consensus moderation practices to be systematically collected for the University for the first time. Initial results revealed that academics were able to successfully record their consensus moderation activities; allowing the University to collect Institutional data to evidence support of quality assurance of assessment and academic standards.

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Author contact details:

Nicola D. Shapland, n.shapland@griffith.edu.au

Please cite as: Shapland, N.D., & Nulty, D.D. (2012). Building an Institutional Reporting Framework for Consensus Moderation Practices. In M. Brown, M. Hartnett & T. Stewart (Eds.), *Future challenges, sustainable futures*. Proceedings ascilite Wellington 2012. (pp.831-832).

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