

## **DIRECTORATE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING**

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT**

#### **POLICY ON MODERATION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS**

##### **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE POLICY**

###### **Preamble**

*Given the fact that NOUN is committed to being regarded as the foremost university providing effective and quality education, the need to institutionalize global best practices has become imperative*

*Realizing that academic assessment is one strategy by which the University can evaluate the achievement of the above-named goals, the need to institutionalize moderation as part of the academic culture of NOUN underscores the justification for this policy.*

*In recognition of the above commitment, there is the need to ensure that graduates of the University are nationally and globally competitive, and possess the requisite skills and knowledge to contribute to societal development, through adequate moderation of examination papers as a strategy for the effective assessment of learning outcomes.*

*In view of the foregoing, the objectives of this policy on moderation of examination papers are:*

- 1 The policy provides a framework for the valid and fair assessment of learning outcomes
- 2 The policy spells out the roles and responsibilities of Faculties and Academic Departments with regard to the development of robust assessment instruments
- 3 The Policy seeks to reduce the incidence of subjectivity in setting examination papers. Moderation is required for every assessment which involves a degree of subjectivity and the setting of examination papers is one of them.

# QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY ON MODERATION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS

## 1.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

Moderation is a quality assurance process that aims to maintain the validity and reliability of the assessment tasks (examination papers) and their marking. The scope of the policy covers final year Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses. It is the duty of the Faculties and Academic Departments to ensure that the policy is conscientiously implemented. This will help to ensure that learning outcomes are validly assessed.

2.0 WHO IS A MODERATOR? A moderator is an academic who is competent (academically, or experience wise, or both) in the field in which he/she is called upon to moderate. As a moderator, he/she is supposed to step in the shoes of the Examiners to be able to provide a balanced and unbiased point of view. His/her primary concern is to check the accuracy of the Question Papers; more importantly, however, his/her duty is to ensure that the questions that have been set are suitable, appropriate and relevant for the level for which they are intended to be addressed.

## 3.0 DUTIES OF A MODERATOR

The Moderator shall:

3.1 Moderate all questions of the examination paper, paying particular attention to clarity and mechanics of language and spellings;

3.2 Moderate the marking scheme/indicative marking criteria. This will include moderating the outline model answers for essay-type or open-ended question and the allocation of marks for each part/section or step;

3.3 Moderate the general instructions on the front cover of the Question Paper, including module name, code, time-allocation and any other instruction;

3.4 Ensure that special tables, formulae and other technical documents accompanying the Question Paper are available;

3.5 Edit and suggest improvements to the questions;

3.6 Ensure that there is a balance between the time allocated for the paper, the complexity or level of difficulty of the questions and marks allocated;

3.7 Check and suggest improvements to the model answers or outline model answers and marking schemes/indicative marking criteria to dovetail with intended answers; and

3.8 In collaboration with the Examiner, he/she may modify, change or even replace a question.

#### 4.1 QUALIFICATIONS OF MODERATORS

Internal and external Moderation of Examination questions shall be carried out by the Faculties. In the case of External moderators (Senior lecturers and above), they shall be approved by Senate. For internal moderators, the academic staff shall not be less than Lecturer II with Ph.D. Where a Lecturer II with Ph.D is not available in the Department, any qualified Examiner in the relevant course shall be allowed to moderate.

#### 4.2 EXTERNAL MODERATION

4.2.1 External Moderation shall be limited to Postgraduate and Final year courses;

4.2.2 External Moderators shall be provided with this policy and the Course module to ensure the design of the examination papers and the subsequent marking processes are educationally and pedagogically relevant to NOUN while administratively feasible and sustainable;

4.2.3 It is imperative for Moderators to maintain STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY;

4.2.4 Moderation of Examination papers at Semester Examinations shall be done by Moderators approved by the Senate of the University, in the case of external moderators;

4.2.5 Moderators shall be Senior Academic whose field of expertise falls in the subject area of the Examination paper;

4.2.6 Moderators shall ideally be senior academic than the Setter of the Examination paper;

4.2.7 Moderation of Examination papers shall be done after an interactive session between the Setter and Moderator; and

4.2.8 During the Moderation process, Moderator shall pay attention to the following points: (a) Compliance with the prescribed standard format; (b) Clear instructions to the candidates in the rubric; (c) Time allocation against the number of questions; (d) Mark allocation for questions and distribution of marks within sections and sub sections of a main question; and (e) Availability of a detailed Marking Scheme. (Should submit with the paper)

#### 5.0 WHAT SHALL BE DONE DURING EXTERNAL MODERATION

5.1 The process of Moderation of Examination papers shall be done as an interactive session between the Setter and the Moderator without any prejudice;

5.2 During the process, the Moderator shall present constructive criticisms to improve the standard (quality) of the question paper in a friendly yet in a professional way to avoid any misunderstanding or ill feelings in either party;

5.3 During the process of Moderation both Setter and Examiner shall collaborate with each other to achieve timely Moderation of Examination papers and offer fullest cooperation to the

Examination and Assessment Department of the University to ensure a smooth operation of the Semester Examination;

5.4 External Moderators shall be made to realize by the Faculties that Moderation should not be carried out by proxy. The Moderator shall NOT delegate any of the work entrusted to him/her; and

5.5 The External Moderators shall complete Moderation Report Form provided as Annexure to this Policy.

## 6.0 THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES FOR SETTING EXAM PAPERS

6.1 All the teaching staff and Examiners shall be made aware of the educational and pedagogical orientation of NOUN as an ODL institution. This can be carried out through meetings, seminars, workshops or conference briefing. This shall be done by the Faculties and Academic Departments;

6.2 Setting achievable and realistic deadlines at the beginning of the Semester to ensure that members of academic staff, including Adjunct staff, have enough time to thoroughly carry out their duties in respect of setting exam questions;

6.3 Beginning the Exam paper setting process as early as possible; February for first semester examination and June for second semester examination

6.4 Remind staff and External Examiners of deadlines for setting and moderating papers;

6.5 Advise staff on study leave to prepare Exam papers before the deadline to allow sufficient time for Moderation;

6.6 Ensure that if a member of staff (or Adjunct staff) fails to meet a deadline that procedures are in place to make those responsible aware of the situation and the potential repercussions on the Semester Exam and the students;

6.7 Ensure that the paper Setter is fully aware of how they should set their Exam papers, by when, and in what format they should be submitted to the Department. For example, by providing the paper Setter with clear and timely information; and

6.8 Ensure that the Setter is aware of the need to address the following requirements governing the setting of Examination papers:

- The questions assess the stated learning outcomes
- The questions are properly structured and clearly expressed
- The questions are clear and not ambiguous
- The paper makes it possible to distinguish across the full range of students' ability

- Questions are appropriate in length and difficulty, and given the marks allocated to them
- The marks/questions add up correctly
- The correct statements for the year appear on the rubric

6.9 Vetting of examination questions by the DEA, using Professors, shall be done before external examiners' moderation of the question papers. The Professors' area of specialization shall be in the same discipline of the courses to be moderated or in allied discipline

#### 7.0 GENERAL RULES TO BE APPLIED BY ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARKING SCHEMES BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Developing and providing an appropriate set of Marking Schemes ensure the validity of marking, and they also help maintain the consistency of the marking. Recommended approaches include:

7.1 All the Examiners shall be made aware of the educational and pedagogical orientation of NOUN as an ODL institution. This can be carried out through meetings, seminars, workshops or conference briefing. The Faculties and Departments shall ensure that this is done;

7.2 Developing robust assessment instruments (e.g. rubrics) to articulate what is to be examined as the basis of assessment, hence also minimizing variation across the markers;

7.3 Involving markers in the design of assessment tasks (examination papers), hence also achieving common understanding amongst markers of the educational and pedagogical basis of the assessment; and

7.4 Preparing sample answers/submissions from past semesters for consideration and guide for all examiners involved in developing the marking scheme

#### 8.0 INTERNAL MODERATION

The Internal Moderator shall check the Examination paper is satisfactory with respect to:

- a. Rubric (front cover): materials and instructions
- b. Structure and balance of questions
- c. Level and coverage
- d. Mark allocation and Marking Scheme/model answers
- e. Conformity with Module Content and Specification

#### 9.0 REVIEW MEETINGS

9.1 The Departments shall hold Departmental Board meeting before and after each moderation exercise to prepare for the moderation exercise and to review the outcome of the exercise, and make appropriate recommendations to improve the validity of the exercise

9.2 Take minutes of the meetings, specifying the names of moderators, their ranks, disciplines and courses moderated, among other information

9.3 Send hard and soft copies of the minutes of the meeting to the Quality Assurance Unit, Directorate of Academic Planning through: [qualityassurance@noun.edu.ng](mailto:qualityassurance@noun.edu.ng)

#### 10.0 COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF MODERATION REPORT FORM

10.1 The Heads of Departments shall ensure that the Moderation Report Form is completed by the External examiner.

10.2 The completed Moderation Report Form shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor.

ANNEXURE 1

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

REPORT FORM– MODERATOR OF EXAMINATION PAPER

Year and Semester:

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CourseCode&Title:

.....

Department:

.....

Faculty

.....

Please respond to the following questions. Each response ranges from 5 of 1

**5: Highly Agreeable 4: Fairly Agreeable 3: Agreeable 2: Least Agreeable 1:Not Agreeable**

1. Most of the questions in this paper are newly formulated .....

2. This question paper follows the course material .....

3. Contents of questions are adequate for the entire course material  
.....

4. Marking Scheme is well prepared with rationally allocated marks  
.....

5 The distribution of marks is acceptable in accordance with .....

the content of the paper

6 Questions were formed with proper wording and phrase which are  
.....  
unambiguous and understandable.

7 The Examination paper contains different types of questions such as .....

direct, analytical, supportive opinion, case study etc.

I declare that all the information given is true

**Signature of Moderator:** .....

**Name of Moderator:** .....

**Date:**

.....

.....

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**Rank of Moderator**.....

**Comments by the Head of Department:**

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**Signature by Head of Department:** .....

**Date:-----**

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