

PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR DENTAL THERAPY AND ORAL HYGIENE

MODERATION POLICY

PURPOSE OF THE MODERATION POLICY

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for both internal and external moderation of the assessment of candidates. Moderation forms an integral part of the quality assurance functions of the Professional Board to ensure universally acceptable and credible admission of practitioners into the profession of Dental Assistants. This highlights the critical importance of putting in place a sound moderation process within the profession.

Moderation is a quality assurance process which serves as a surety that an assessment of a candidate was conducted in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner. Moderation ensures that all moderators assessing the candidates are using comparable assessment methods and are making similar and consistent judgments about candidates' performance.

Moderation which is conducted by or within the Professional Board for Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene is conducted for the following reasons:

- i. To verify that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable;
- ii. To lend credibility to the assessment system;
- iii. To ensure the ethical behaviour of candidates and moderators;
- iv. To identify the need to redesign assessments if required;
- v. To encourage assessments to be at the level of national standards;
- vi. To provide an appeals procedure for dissatisfied candidates;
- vii. To evaluate the performance of moderators;
- viii. To assist moderators improve their skills levels through participation;
- ix. To provide procedures for the de-registration of unsatisfactory moderators;
- x. To provide feedback to the Board regarding the overall performance of candidates.

The appointment of moderators will be conducted by the Professional Board or the relevant Committee established by the Board for this purpose.

INTERNAL MODERATION

Internal moderators are tasked with the following duties:

- i. moderation of the examination paper and the answer sheets after the marking thereof;

- ii. 30% of the answer sheets have to be moderated, as well as all the answer sheets of candidates who obtained 90% or more and 30% or less in the examination;
- ii. establish systems to standardize assessment, including plans for internal moderation;
- iii. monitor consistency of assessment records;
- iv. through sampling, check the design of assessment materials for appropriateness before they are used, monitor assessment processes, check candidates' evidence, check the results and decisions of markers for consistency;
- v. provide appropriate and necessary support, advice and guidance to examiners;
- vi. report to the Board on the process of internal moderation.

THE MODERATION PROCESS

Pre-assessment moderation

The moderator has to during the pre-assessment moderation determine whether:

- i. the task to be assessed gives opportunity for the learner to demonstrate competency for registration as a Dental Assistant;
- ii. the instructions to the learner contained in the task are clear;
- iii. the assessment schedule states what evidence is to be collected;
- iv. the assessment schedule states how judgment of competency will be made.

The moderation exercise should be divided into five stages which are encompassed in the moderation standard, namely:

- i. plan and prepare for moderation;
- ii. conduct moderation;
- iii. advise and support the examiners;
- iv. report, record and administer moderation;
- v. review moderation systems and processes.

PLAN AND PREPARE FOR MODERATION

During this stage, the following activities are carried out:

- i. it is confirmed that a moderation system is in place and planning and preparation activities are aligned with moderation system requirements;
- ii. the scope of the moderation is confirmed with the relevant parties;
- iii. the scope and nature of assessment is planned to ensure the manageability of moderation and to enable a fair judgment to be passed on the assessments under review;

- iv. the context of the assessments under review are clarified with the moderators or the assessment agency, and special needs are taken into consideration;
- v. it is established whether the moderation processes is sufficient to deal with all common forms of evidence. Relevant documentation is prepared in line with the moderation system requirements and in such a way as to ensure that moderation decisions are clearly documented;
- vi. the availability and readiness for use of the required physical and human resources are ensured. Logistical arrangements are confirmed with the relevant role-players prior to the moderation;
- vii. moderation techniques are described and compared in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications with a view to uphold the principles of assessment and the need for manageable, credible and reliable moderation.

TIMELINES FOR MODERATORS

The examiners will be required to submit the examination paper **AND** the memorandum to the moderator **at least 8 weeks prior to date of the examination**;

the moderator will be required to return the moderated examination paper to the examiner to the examiner within **1 week of date of receipt of the paper**;

the final examination paper has to be submitted to the Committee Coordinator **at least 6 weeks prior to date of the examination**.

CONDUCT MODERATION

During this stage, the following activities are carried out:

- i. moderation is conducted in accordance with the moderation plan. Unforeseen events are handled without compromising the validity of the moderation exercise;
- ii. the assessment instruments and process are checked and judged in terms of their appropriateness, fairness, validity and sufficiency for assessment. It is established whether the assessment task gave opportunity for the learner to demonstrate the requirements of the examination as well as whether the instructions were clear to the learner;
- iii. assessment decisions are confirmed and this enables the Professional Board's requirements for consistency to be achieved. The type of evidence that was to be collected as well as the manner in which judgment of competence was to be done is verified;
- iv. the special needs of candidates are confirmed to have been provided for without compromising the required standards;
- v. it is ensured that the proportion of assessment decisions selected for verification meets the Board's requirements for consistency and reliability as well as the cost-effective use of time and resources;

- vi. appeals against assessment decisions are handled in accordance with the appeal procedures;
- vii. key principles of assessment are described in terms of their importance and effect on the assessment and the application of the assessment results;
- viii. a variety of assessment methods are described and compared in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications.

ADVISE AND SUPPORT EXAMINERS

During this stage, the following activities are carried out:

- i. it is ensured that the nature and quality of advice facilitates a common understanding of the relevant questions asked and issues related to their assessment;
- ii. it is ensured that the nature and quality of advice promotes assessment in accordance with good assessment principles and enhances the development and maintenance of quality management systems in line with Professional Board's requirements;
- iii. all communication are conducted in accordance with relevant confidentiality requirements.

REPORT, RECORD AND ADMINISTER MODERATION

During this stage, the following activities are carried out:

- i. moderation findings are reported to designated role-players within agreed time-frames (seven working days) and according to the Professional Board's requirements for format and content;
- ii. records are kept and maintained in accordance with Professional Board's requirements;
- iii. confidentiality of information relating to candidates, moderators, examiners and markers is preserved in accordance with the requirements of the Professional Board.

REVIEW MODERATION SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

During this stage, the following activities are carried out:

- i. the strengths and weaknesses of the moderation systems and processes are identified in terms of their manageability and ability to make judgments on the quality and validity of assessment decisions. To this end, the following is verified:

- a. whether the assessment activity and schedule were applied as approved and/or stated in the material;
 - b. whether evidence was collected as per the assessment schedule;
 - c. whether the learner's performance was judged as stated in the assessment schedule or is consistent with the standard or question asked by the examiner.
- ii. recommendations on moderation systems and processes are made to facilitate their improvement in line with the HPCSA's requirements and the overall manageability of moderation;
 - iii. the entire moderation process is reviewed with the view to enhance the credibility and integrity of the examination system.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MODERATORS

Moderators will be appointed by the Professional Board or the relevant Committee established by the Board.

Moderators have to be competent in the profession in which he/she wishes to moderate. The competence must be at or above the level of the standard of the qualification in question.

VERIFICATION PROCESS

Verification is the process whereby the moderation process is checked and judged on the basis of the following aspects:

- i. consistency and rigour;
- ii. compliance with Professional Board's examination policy, processes and criteria;
- iii. compliance with the assessment criteria.

The verification process helps with the identification and justification of weaknesses, strengths and trends in the moderation process. This information provides a basis for making recommendations for the improvement of the moderation processes, thus promoting the objectives of quality assessment and the existence of a credible recognition system.

The verification process comprises the following activities:

- i. plan and prepare for verification;
- ii. conduct verification;
- iii. evaluate the verification plan and processes;

- iv. checking that all the staff involved in moderation are appropriately qualified and experienced;
- v. checking the credibility of moderation methods and instruments;
- vi. checking moderators' decisions;
- vii. record and report verification findings and recommendations; and
- viii. advice and support moderators and examiners.

The verification system will be managed by the relevant Committee established by the Professional Board.