

External peer review of assessment

- ▶ A professional learning resource supporting the external referencing of academic standards
- ▶ For experienced reviewers and for people preparing to review for the first time

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Defining external peer review of assessment

- ▶ “The practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another’s unit/subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to the unit learning outcomes. It includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning” (Booth et al, 2015).
- ▶ External peer review is a verification process that leads to enhanced alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks.
- ▶ External peer review provides assurance that the marker(s) have made the right judgements about students’ work.
- ▶ As the peer review cycle continues, the quality of courses and judgements about student attainment standards improve and become more comparable across institutions.
- ▶ Peer review of assessment allows colleagues collectively and collegially to work together to improve the student experience
- ▶ It also provides a professional learning opportunity for academic staff

What external peer review processes exist currently?



GO8 - Quality Verification System



ERoS - External Review of Standards



IRU - Academic Calibration Process



Peer Review Portal

Few of these peer review processes will help reviewers undertake this. This resource will support reviewers:

- Assess assessment standards through examples, 7 focused questions with supporting templates and sometimes supported with online/f2f discussion
- Show how they can provide effective feedback using a conversational approach to support unit and course/program improvement.

Each section of this resource addresses a topic that you should think about

- ▶ **WHY?** What is the purpose of the review?
- ▶ **WHAT?** What will you be focusing on?
- ▶ **WHO?** Who will you be working with?
- ▶ **HOW?** What is the process that you will be following?
- ▶ **REVIEW QUESTIONS:** How can these 7 questions guide the focus of the review?
- ▶ **PROVIDING FEEDBACK:** How can you provide feedback that is constructive, collegial and takes a conversational tone in a written/online environment?
- ▶ **FOLLOW-UP:** How can you reflect on the peer review process that you have just undertaken?
- ▶ **GLOSSARY OF TERMS:** Some definitions commonly associated with the peer review of assessment
- ▶ **REFERENCES:** Some key projects in the area of assessment standards, quality and peer review



ACTIVITY - Learning by doing

- We now ask you in groups of FOUR to assess assessment standards through the example given to you, via a conversational approach.
- Then to provided effective feedback (oral or written) to support unit and course/program improvement.
- You have a handout to show you how to work through this

7 REVIEW QUESTIONS - We ask you to focus on Questions 1 and 2

Questions 1-2 ask the reviewer to focus broadly on the assessment as it fits the unit and the course.

1. Are the unit learning outcomes aligned with the relevant course learning outcomes?
2. Are the unit learning outcomes appropriate to the AQF level of the unit?

Questions 3-7 ask the reviewer to look closely at the assessment design in relation to learning activities, guidance and support.

3. Does the assessment task enable all students to demonstrate attainment of the unit learning outcomes and the course learning outcomes?

4. Is the description of the performance standards appropriate to the specific unit learning outcomes and course learning outcomes?
5. Is the method of assessment capable of confirming that all relevant specified course learning outcomes and unit learning outcomes are achieved?
6. Do the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?
7. What can be done to improve the assessment of the unit?

ACTIVITY - Start!

Follow handout

Indicators Relating to Level of Assessment - Iain CA

- ▶ Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- ▶ Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
- ▶ Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs)
- ▶ Blooms Taxonomy Level
- ▶ Assessment Task Specification
- ▶ Specify performance for degree program
- ▶ Should align with AQF levels
- ▶ Specify the intended performance from the unit - should relate to CLOs
- ▶ Indicates tasks at a range of cognitive levels
- ▶ Indicates learning and performance from the task (e.g. rubric)

Level of Assessment - Examples

Evidence based practice in Nursing and Midwifery

- A second year unit refers to research in the unit title. In their feedback students said the unit was too difficult as they could not understand research studies.
- An assessment task required the students to:
 - The aim of this assessment is to enable students to explore, in detail, the research process by reviewing a journal article.
 - Using the appropriate guide ... review one of the papers available ... in vUWS.
 - Please use research methods literature to inform the guided review
 - Students must respond to each of the questions provided in the guide for analysis using academic writing ...
 - A minimum of (3) recent academic references must be used to demonstrate your understanding

Level of Assessment - Examples

- **Evidence based practice in Nursing and Midwifery**
 - ULOs include:
 - Compare and contrast the major research paradigms, principles, concepts and processes that inform nursing and midwifery knowledge and practice.
 - Analyse and evaluate literature utilised as a basis for evidence-based nursing and midwifery practice.
 - Discuss the translation of evidence based research findings into nursing and midwifery practice.

Level of Assessment - Examples

- **Evidence based practice in Nursing and Midwifery**

- From the ULOs, in particular the one beginning ‘Analyse and evaluate literature ...’ the unit appears to be pitched at a much higher level than second year, so the students have a point in their feedback. Two particular points were observed by the UCs:
 - The tutors for the unit are high level researchers who may interpret the unit as asking the students to critique research studies
 - Critiquing research studies is very difficult even for Masters and PhD students.
- It appears that the ULOs, sources and assessment tasks are set at a higher level than is appropriate for the unit.

Level of Assessment - Examples

- **Evidence based practice in Nursing and Midwifery**
 - Revision proposed to sources, activities and assessment
 - A practical scenario was devised as a context for evidence from the research studies
 - One qualitative and one quantitative research study was selected. The students could choose one to analyse in the context of the scenario.
 - As the ULO states ‘Analyse and evaluate literature utilised as a basis for evidence-based nursing and midwifery practice’, the guidelines for analysing and evaluating the research were revised to focus on evidence from the research that would inform action for the practical issue outlined in the scenario
 - To ‘Compare and contrast the major research paradigms’, students are asked in the assignment to consider how research from the alternative paradigm may also inform action needed for the scenario.
 - Guidelines for the task, and guidelines for tutors on the scope of the assignment, should ensure that the assignment is at the right level for students.
 - Moderation may be needed

QUESTIONS for feedback

- ▶ Would you find this resource useful to you in preparing to undertake an external peer review of assessment? If so, why, if not, why not?

- ▶ How useful is the conversational approach to help you to frame your responses to the review questions?

- ▶ How do you see professional learning in relation to this resource best delivered in your school?