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IHEA Collaborative Working Model for External Moderation and Integrity of the Assessment Process

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Introduction

The Australian Higher Education system has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Higher education courses have been almost entirely shifted to online delivery to comply with the strict physical distancing regime implemented by the government in order to limit contact between individuals to reduce the spread of the virus. Aside from issues related to the quality of the delivery and the student experience, online and remote delivery presents concerns around academic integrity and assessment moderation. These concerns become particularly pertinent in an environment where the transition to online teaching was unexpected and had to be made in a hurry. Forward planning for assessment regime change was not necessarily undertaken prior to the transition to online delivery, and therefore, assurance of academic integrity and assessment authentication were only considered after the transition was already made.

The COVID-19 crisis, then, may lead to significant impacts on how higher education (HE) institutions undergo external moderation and monitor academic integrity. The global health distancing measures for containing COVID-19 are dramatically changing how the HE sector interacts and collaborates with students and academics which will, in turn, cause a massive rethink on how we externally moderate assessment and monitor academic integrity in a fully online environment.

The sector's shift to an online environment as a longer term alteration to the higher education environment has important implications for government education departments, regulatory and accreditation agencies in ensuring that academic standards have been assessed, compared and evidenced in an online environment. The consequences of not having appropriate online support mechanisms in place for assuring standards brings with it legal and regulatory ramifications.

Cloud-based innovation online platforms and systems are urgently needed to address this sector shift to protect students' interests and graduate outcomes, including HE institutional reputations. A collaborative online working model for collaborating on assessment and academic integrity is necessary to share the regulatory burden and significant costs associated with assessment, online exams and contract cheating.

Another impact or result of the crisis is the development of a new qualification at AQF level 5 – the Undergraduate Certificate. These Certificates, in the context of the COVID crisis and to receive government funding, are to be delivered online in key areas of government priority for employment. In the post-COVID environment, there will be many long-term benefits to students and the higher education sector of these new Certificates. They provide students with the opportunity to study a short course while still completing a nationally recognised qualification, assisting with attrition issues for students who for reasons of life events or course selection decisions would otherwise withdraw from study with no qualification and be counted in the attrition statistics. These new courses also allow students in these circumstances to avoid accumulating unproductive student debt. The Undergraduate Certificate is a valuable addition to the AQF because of its capacity to be designed to meet employer needs and therefore, student needs, for useful industry-based qualifications. This new model of learning could establish a framework for a broader micro-credentials system within Australian higher education.

The Undergraduate Certificate will be reviewed in 18 months and its continuation beyond that timeframe will be dependent on the quality of those offered prior to the review. In order to ensure that the Undergraduate Certificate survives to fulfil a very useful longer term function in Australia higher education, providers will need to use good methods of ensuring academic integrity, the avoidance of contract cheating and good processes for external assessment moderation.

The Peer Review Portal has been working with Independent Higher Education Australia over several years to offer a benchmarking mechanism to IHEA members. One of the areas of focus for the 2019 benchmarking project was external moderation and integrity of assessment. The project is designed to identify sector best practice and the results of the project could inform the development of good systems around external moderation and academic integrity moving forward into the post-COVID higher education environment.

Theory of Moderation and Integrity of Assessment

Shared challenges across the HE sector

A shared challenge in the immediate future for the HE sector is how to provide regulators, accreditors, moderation teams and external examiners with *interactive, secure cloud-based review platforms and video conferencing apps* which can record and document the online review process. For example, the estimated worth of Zoom has increased \$4 billion since coronavirus started (The Guardian, 31 March, 2020) through offering virtual meeting rooms, and it is changing the way the globe is interacting with increased security measures coming into place.

The current COVID-19 measures on social distancing is forcing HE quality assurance agencies, and in turn HE institutions, to change their mode of delivery around assessment and review. A seemingly simple, yet increasingly complex, solution to reducing significant costs in assessment and accreditation review lies in the development of new partnerships and cloud-based infrastructure. A White Paper on *Next Generation Assessment* (Coates & OES, 2018) asserts that the delivery of new technologies and online platforms will improve productivity in assessment practices and quality, through collaborations with education service companies, industry and networks. Coates and OES (2018, p. 4) ominously predicted in relation to assessment that, ‘business as usual’ is unlikely to prevail. There is a need for smart workarounds. Change is likely to be provoked by capabilities established through new partnerships and infrastructure.’

To clearly map the impact of COVID-19 measures is having on global assessment practice and review, it is important to consider the three eras of assessment (Coates & OES, 2018, p.6). Figure 1 highlights the shifting practices from traditional (1990s and before), stretched (1990s to 2020) and next generation (2020s and after).

	Traditional > 1990s and before	Stretched > 1990s to 2020	Next generation > 2020s and after
Authority	University	University or regulator	Shared
Production	Solo academics	Academic teams	Co-creation
Format	Paper	Paper and online	Online
Location	Campus	Campus and online	Online
Implementation	Universities	Universities	Specialists
Scoring	Solo academics	Moderated practice	Automated
Reporting	Generic	Contextualised	Customised

Figure 1. Three Eras of Assessment

Global assessment practices and reviews are currently in the ‘stretched’ era, an apt term for the current COVID-19 situation which relies on on-campus academic teams, moderating practice both through paper and online in a highly contextualised reporting environment. The HE institutions, regulators and accreditation authorities are significantly stretched in relation to resources and rising costs in delays to assessment and accreditation.

The infrastructure requirements for the ‘stretched’ era are evident in current practice. A majority of online accreditation/assessment reporting and curriculum management systems are internal, organisation-based rather than cloud-based and collaboratively shared across institutions, including those online systems with regulatory and accreditation authorities. These online review systems are also mainly process-based, document repositories rather than set up to enable evidence-based discussions in an interactive, online environment. Evidence on assessment and review is mainly communicated to reviewers/assessors in a transmission process approach rather than collaborative, shared approach with different stakeholders and collaborators. Also, missing from these online review systems is the co-creation of assessment practice and calibration through relationships and networks.

Next Generation assessment and review (Coates & OES, 2018) will be characterised by the following online features outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Online working model for external moderation and integrity of assessment

Assessment Infrastructure	Next Generation	Features
Authority	Shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A collaborative, shared approach to assessment and review with regulatory, accreditation, industry bodies and other networks Light touch, sector approach to assessment and review
Production	Co-creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access audio and video resources and recordings and other online resources

Format	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cloud-based to enable interactivity and engagement ▪ Talk and chat with individuals and groups, tag groups for special interest groups or disciplinary groups ▪ Home page site for each user ▪ Dashboard of review evidence to collect, reflect on and share with others internally and externally ▪ Institution home page for institutional reviewers
Location	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in a secure online environment with academics, external examiners through webinars, online streaming events and online training resources ▪ Institutional Co-ordinators, disciplinary groups and disciplinary coordinators ▪ Connect to the list of readings/resources within a Resources tool
Implementation	Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment and review specialists involved in training and coordinating collaborative sector-led reviews and actions ▪ Online learning platforms specialists for organising assessment and review groups and online resources and conferences ▪ Credentialed review and assessment specialists with academic and research profile which can be searched/added to reviews
Scoring	Automated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Automated, shared reporting and calibration of results ▪ Automated, de-identified results through iPhone, iPad and computer for workshops and meetings
Reporting	Customised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor all results of assessment moderation meetings and reviews institutionally and cross-institutionally ▪ Customised reports-online, PDF, Excel ▪ Ability to upload and share evidence as reviewers ▪ Curation of online resources and reporting

Online Peer Solutions (OPS) is an Australian ed technology company (trading as the Peer Review Portal) which has established a *cloud-based review management system and service to support assessment and review in higher education*. The technology ed company aims to support, connect and advance individuals, institutions and networks in quality, assessment and review.

A long-term mission is to develop an online collaborative service model to reduce regulatory burden in assessment and integrity of assessment in the HE sector which is also a cost-benefit; efficient; and secure solution for education institutions, particularly disciplinary-based practitioners and external examiners. The Peer Review Portal is an example of evidence-based design (Coates & OES, 2018, p.8), with key evidence uploads and reports for review and assessment.

The development of the [Peer Review Portal](#) has involved extensive research and stakeholder engagement (Booth, 2018; Booth, 2017; Booth, Beckett, & Saunders, 2016). The Portal currently has 199 registered HE institutions from 21 countries, with 1730 registered users. It is a cloud-based review management system which can support institutions and networks in moderation of assessment (inputs/outputs); support for accreditation; course/unit review; student evaluation; teaching scholarship; and benchmarking. TEQSA has endorsed the Peer Review Portal as an optional online support mechanism for external review of English language standards and external referencing (See TEQSA Guidance Notes: [ELICOS Direct Entry \(2019\)](#) and [External Referencing \(including benchmarking\) \(2019\)](#)).

OPS has a national partnership with the Australian peak body, Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA), to lead sector projects for their member institutions in benchmarking and external review of assessment since 2016. From 2018-2020, OPS has coordinated 38 HE institutions to review 340 subjects across the HE sector using the Peer Review Portal (Booth, 2019; Booth, 2020). Training on external review of assessment was provided to all institutions (with over 300 assessors) as part of the sector review process and all reviews worked on a quid-pro-quo basis. This report provides the findings from the IHEA Benchmarking Initiative (2019).

Similarly, OPS has also coordinated a [national benchmarking review of writing assessment](#) with University English Language Centres (UECA) (Booth & Roche, 2019), which included 21 Australian university English language centres assessing writing with 60 assessors. This national sector benchmarking review was in direct response to the ELICOS Standards (2018) requirement that all assessment is valid, reliable, fair and clearly referenced to criteria (Standard P4.1c(ii)). There are opportunities, then, to utilise this model for benchmarking – as outlined in more detail below – for the benefit of the sector in a variety of settings, including for ensuring the quality of the assessment element of

the new short course program and ensuring online assessment, which is becoming more prominent, maintains high standards of academic integrity with external moderation.

IHEA's Benchmarking Model Using Peer Review Portal

Aims and Objectives

The 2019 benchmarking review on assessment moderation and academic integrity involved the participation of seventeen independent higher education (HE) institutions.

The seventeen higher education (HE) institutions involved in the IHEA Benchmarking Initiative (2019) on assessment moderation and academic integrity include:

1. Academies Australasia Polytechnic Pty Ltd. (AAPoly)
2. AIM Business School
3. Asia Pacific International College (APIC)
4. Australian College of the Arts Pty Ltd. (Collarts)
5. Curtin College (Navitas)
6. Griffith College (Navitas)
7. International College of Management, Sydney (ICMS)
8. Kaplan Business School (KBS)
9. Kaplan Professional
10. King's Own Institute (KOI)
11. Leaders Institute
12. Le Cordon Bleu Australia
13. Macleay College
14. Torrens University Australia (TUA)
15. Universal Business School Sydney (UBSS)
16. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
17. Wentworth Institute of Higher Education (WIN)

The **specific aims** of the IHEA Benchmarking Project were to:

- Benchmark at the discipline level assessment inputs/outputs and academic integrity;
- Build capacity for IHEA member HE institutions to participate in external referencing activity to improve their educational performance;
- Build capacity for individuals to learn and share good practice and challenges across disciplines and institutions; and
- Develop institutional and national recommendations, including good practice case studies through building collaborative networks.

The **specific activities** of the IHEA Benchmarking Project were:

- IHEA Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity was developed for the project participants (See Appendix I);
- Participant involvement in a peer review and calibration workshop, with access to workshop materials and the website;
- Development of an Assessment Moderation Plan with 124 review projects with over 140 assessors;
- Sharing of supporting Documents and External Assessors Reports
- The development of a final report that was shared with participants.

The IHEA national benchmarking review aligns with TEQSA's increased focus on partnerships driving quality, as well as encouraging all providers to undertake their own external reviews, including using independent subject matter experts. IHEA-member institutions are uniquely positioned as a strong collaborative network in driving institutional and sector change.

Methodology

External referencing activity provides evidence of the quality and standing of a provider's operations, whilst using an external evidence base as context for the development of internal improvements and reporting, whilst establishing and fostering collaborative improvement across the sector as well as contributing to institutional change.

The [Peer Review Portal](#) was used to undertake the 124 external reviews. The Portal is a cloud-based review management system which has TEQSA approval as an optional online support mechanism for external referencing and Direct Entry Standards.

Project Timeline

- Phase 1: Agreement on draft project proposal [August 12-16 2019];
- Phase 2: Project set up on the Peer Review Portal, Collaboration Agreements and project payment, supporting document for assessment moderation and academic integrity [End August 2019];
- Phase 3: Self-review reports and data collection phase [November 2019-January, 2020];
- Phase 4: Peer Review and Calibration Workshop [11-12 December 2019] hosted by UBSS in Sydney; and
- Phase 5: Final Report [February 2020].

Weekly zoom sessions were held over 5-6 weeks with institutional coordinators, with one-to-one follow up with institutions and academic teams when required. 124 reviews have been organised by the 17 HE institutions. The review schedule was initially set for 3 months but has been extended to ensure institutions have time to undertake the reviews. More work on integrating a review of academic integrity as part of external moderation was noted as part of the zoom sessions and peer review workshop.

External Moderation and Academic Integrity: Calibration Process

IHEA has led a sector-wide collaborative working model for external moderation and integrity of assessment. 17 HE institutions participated on a national project on external moderation and academic integrity, which involved institutions externally reviewing their assessment with each other and other institutions (AAPoly; AIM Business School; Asia Pacific International College; Collarts; Curtin College; Griffith College; ICMS; Kaplan Business School; Kaplan Professional; KOL; Leaders Institute; Le Cordon Bleu; Macleay College; Torrens University Australia; UBSS; VIT; and Wentworth Institute).

IHEA's model of partnership with Peer Review Portal provides a method for institutions to undertake a review of assessment and academic integrity, which is purposeful, collaborative, evidence-based and informs improvements to courses and selected units of study within courses.

External review of assessment provides evidence that the assessment methods and student grading are appropriate, aligned to the unit and course learning outcomes which are comparable with similar courses offered by other institutions. External review of assessment includes a cohort analysis of student performance data (attrition/retention and completion rates). See *TEQSA Guidance Note on External Referencing. Version 2.5, 16 April 2019*. *External review of an institution's academic integrity processes and outcomes* provides evidence that academic integrity is maintained in student assessment and awarding of grades. Breaches of academic integrity include plagiarism, contract cheating, submitting for assessment work prepared by another person, collusion, cheating in examinations and other assessment tasks. See *TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity. Version 1.2, 28 March 2019*. To ensure comparability across institutions and disciplines, *group calibration exercises* are undertaken to inform disciplinary and professional standards and provide professional learning for staff.

An example of how the portal was used to create an exemplary review system can be seen in the actions of Mr Shagun Khemka from Kaplan Business School. He used the national review process to include, one external academic reviewer and one internal academic reviewer. These two review reports are then calibrated (by adding 'Chair' in the Peer Review Portal). This review process also acts as a professional development opportunity for academic staff both internally and externally. Shagun also presented a calibration of academic standards at the Peer Review Workshop, as he has expertise in calibration through the accounting discipline work, Achievement Matters.

The result of this element of the project was that a national recommendation was put forward at the Peer Review Workshop, to build calibration into external review of assessment and academic integrity processes between institutions at the discipline level.

Recommendation: *To build on the annual external review of assessment processes and academic integrity processes with IHEA members, to develop an annual one-day calibration workshop for IHEA members to benchmark and calibrate at the discipline level (to be attached to the current peer review workshop).*

To support this process, IHEA should build a team of expert calibrators across disciplines so that it develops capacity for IHEA member academics to become experts in calibration and consensus within their disciplines. This annual workshop should include participation of industry and accreditation bodies. Participants should be awarded an IHEA Certificate of Completion. Implementation of this recommendation would also build capacity for IHEA members to put forward their up-and-coming course accreditation reviews for external reviewers and calibrators. It would strengthen their reviews with a calibration exercise attached to their reviews.

Conclusion

By using a framework of assessment theory as a measure, online portals can be used for institutions to conduct benchmarking projects that facilitate the sharing of best practice in academic integrity and external moderation. **IHEA's partnership with the Peer Review Portal demonstrates a model of online collaboration that will become increasingly important in a post-COVID-19 tertiary sector that engages in much more online learning and is more open to short courses and micro-credentials.** To support HE in Australia, there needs to be a sector-wide collaboration to reduce duplication of effort which involves TEQSA, accrediting bodies and HE institutions. To support this collaborative effort, Peer Review Portal's cloud-based review management model can provide the sector with:

- Assessment and review specialists involved in training and coordinating collaborative sector-led reviews and actions
- Online learning platforms specialists for organising assessment and review groups and online resources and conferences
- Credentialed review and assessment specialists with academic and research profile which can be searched/added to reviews

Crisis induced changes to the sector need to be managed in a way that protects the quality of Australia's education system while also allowing adaptability and agility in course design to respond more quickly to the changing educational needs of future students. A key example in the higher education sector which has seen the transition from student support *being fully on campus within an institution* towards *cloud-based support services which support a range of HE institutions, such as Studiosity* (which also supports academic integrity). Instead of having 'subject' specialists supporting students, there are 'review and assessment specialists' which support higher education providers to respond intuitively and collaboratively, whilst providing institutions, regulatory and accrediting agencies with an evidence base for regulation and quality assurance.

IHEA's partnership with the Peer Review Portal is a model for the future for higher education providers seeking quality assurance measures in a post-COVID world. Having a tested system for online collaboration that assures the quality of qualifications, and education delivery more generally, through sharing and developing best practice in areas such as academic integrity and external moderation of assessment will be crucial to realising that need.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity Procedure

IHEA Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity Procedure

1. Introduction

The IHEA Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity Procedure is an external review of assessment and academic integrity outcomes and processes developed for IHEA participating institutions to support meeting the Higher Education Standards Framework (Thresholds Standards) 2015 requirements.

2. Compliance

The relevant standards in the HES Framework (2015) are 1.4.1; 1.4.3; 1.4.4; 5.2.1; 5.3.1; 5.3.4; and 5.3.7.

3. Purpose

This Procedure provides a method for institutions to undertake a review of assessment and academic integrity, which is purposeful, collaborative, evidence-based and informs improvements to courses and selected units of study within courses.

External review of assessment provides evidence that the assessment methods and student grading are appropriate, aligned to the unit and course learning outcomes which are comparable with similar courses offered by other institutions. External review of assessment includes a cohort analysis of student performance data (attrition/retention and completion rates). See *TEQSA Guidance Note on External Referencing. Version 2.5, 16 April 2019.*

External review of an institution's academic integrity processes and outcomes provides evidence that academic integrity is maintained in student assessment and awarding of grades. Breaches of academic integrity include plagiarism, contract cheating, submitting for assessment work prepared by another person, collusion, cheating in examinations and other assessment tasks. See *TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity. Version 1.2, 28 March 2019.*

To ensure comparability across institutions and disciplines, *group calibration exercises* are undertaken to inform disciplinary and professional standards and provide professional learning for staff.

4. Principles

- **Effective:** External referencing of assessment methods, grading and students' achievement of learning outcomes are comparable across courses of study which supports both the quality enhancement and quality assurance of courses and units of study.
- **Ethical, honest and responsible:** Academic integrity involves using, generating and communicating information in an ethical, honest and responsible manner ([Monash University \(2013\)](#))
- **Efficient, sustainable and secure:** The online Peer Review Portal supports the efficiency, sustainability and security of all course data and reviewer feedback. The external referencing process is also sustainable because it works on a quid-pro-quo basis.
- **Transparent and accountable:** Engages with multiple perspectives to facilitate a critical discussion between teaching staff across comparable courses of study to support consensus building around the student achievement standards. Identifies areas for improvement which are implemented and reported to institutional academic committees.
- **Capacity-building:** Contributes to the professional development of participating staff and the formation of disciplinary and cross disciplinary communities of practice.

5. Procedures

5.1 Formation of institutional teams and cross-disciplinary groups

Institutions identify disciplines and disciplinary teams for the national and international review with other independent providers. Each institution will appoint an institutional coordinator who will liaise with the national coordinator on the external review of assessment and academic integrity project as well as liaise with other institution coordinators on the matching of courses/units of study and discipline experts.

5.2 Roles and responsibilities in external review of assessment and academic integrity

The **national coordinator** will liaise with each individual institution, supporting them with external referencing activity, including regular meetings and professional support on how to use the Peer Review Portal, so that each institution meets the external referencing requirements in a timely manner.

The **institution coordinator** provides support to their disciplinary teams in undertaking the external review of assessment and academic integrity processes as well as act as a mediator when any appeals are made. The institution coordinator will regularly update their institution's external referencing schedule so that information is up-to-date and accessible for other institution coordinators. **Disciplinary/program coordinators** identify courses/units of study for external review, including identifying disciplinary experts to undertake external reviews.

Institution coordinators and/or **disciplinary/program coordinators** can be added as 'Collaborators' within the Peer Review Portal to have oversight on review projects and project teams.

The **review applicant** uploads all the relevant self-review material for the course or unit of study (See checklist of evidence).

The **reviewer/s** undertake the review project on the Peer Review Portal. The reviewer needs to have expertise in the discipline and provide constructive, timely feedback to the review applicant.

5.3 Identification of units of study/courses for external review of assessment and academic integrity

Each institution coordinator will liaise with their disciplinary teams to identify units of study/courses for external review. *Each institution needs to be able to work on a quid pro quo basis to ensure the collaboration is sustainable, efficient and equitable.*

If a unit of study is not matched to a reviewer within the IHEA network, then it can be sent out through the broadcast feature on the Peer Review Portal network with over 1,700 registered reviewers. Institutions will also have access to the global network for educators, OneHE, which have **Global Subject Centres** [<https://onehe.org>] to search for international reviewers.

When identifying units of study for external review, you need to consider:

- Capstone units/or final year units to measure the assurance of course learning outcomes and/or graduate learning outcomes;
- First year units which have high attrition or student failure rates;
- Newly developed units that require external input;
- Units and courses identified for course accreditation or professional accreditation;
- Units that have been identified as requiring review through internal governance channels;
- Assessment design, including assessment task/s and student work sample; and
- Academic integrity processes and outcomes in relation to the unit of study or course.

Institutional coordinators will need to take into consideration both the review applicant's and reviewer's time and capacity to undertake the external referencing process.

5.4 Online matchmaking meetings and project administration

The **national coordinator will organise an agreed schedule of regular online meetings with institutional coordinators**, including disciplinary group meetings. If an institutional coordinator cannot make a meeting time, either a representative from that institution can take part in the meeting/s or another time will be scheduled for this institution.

A national/international schedule of reviews will be shared with each institutional coordinator through Google Docs. The schedule will outline the following information: Institution Coordinator; Disciplinary Coordinator; unit/course code, unit/course name; unit/course information; unit/course coordinator name and email; assessment task selected; name of reviewing institution; reviewer/s name and email.

Individual institution and course team meetings can also be arranged with the national coordinator so as to provide professional development around the external referencing process.

The external peer review methodology is derived from the External Referencing of Standards (ERoS) Project 2016. Questions relating to academic integrity processes and outcome are also part of the review. The template is on the Peer Review Portal under 'Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity'.

The **questions which will be used for each review project** include:

- Are the Unit Learning Outcomes aligned with the relevant Course Learning Outcomes?
- Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate at the AQF level?
- Does the assessment task/s enable students to demonstrate attainment of the relevant ULO's and relevant CLOs?
- in cases of group work, does the assessment task/s enable each student to demonstrate attainment of the relevant ULO's and relevant CLO's?
- Is the description of the performance standards (e.g. marking guide, marking criteria, assessment rubric, annotated work samples) appropriate to the specified ULOs and CLOs?

- Do you agree that the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?
- Do you consider the assessment items submitted can confirm and validate the relevant CLOs and ULOs?
- Was there evidence of students being reminded of academic integrity in the relevant unit/course outline?
- Was there evidence of assessment task design to reduce the likelihood of academic integrity breaches? E.g. Started in class time.
- In cases of a breach of academic integrity, what suggestions would you make in the revision of the assessment design and task?

6. Setting up a review project on the Peer Review Portal

Each institution coordinator and relevant disciplinary teams involved in external peer review of assessment need to be signed up to the Peer Review Portal. Go to <https://peerreviewportal.com>

Institutions involved in the project and their team members need to set up their own individual usernames and passwords to access the Portal. Go to Account and fill in 'My Details' and 'Join an institution/faculty', then click 'Update'.

The Portal has a new feature, **self-join link, which enables anyone with the link can join the project as a reviewer.**

The Portal also has a new feature which allows institutions to **individually pay reviewers**, and the individual bank account details are recorded in the Account section.

When setting up a review project in the Portal, it is important to consider:

- The type of review project: Assessment (inputs/outputs); program review, benchmarking; accreditation support; teaching review and student review.
- **For external review of assessment**, click on assessment inputs/outputs. For institutions undertaking external referencing as part of course accreditation/professional accreditation, you can use program review or accreditation support.

There are four steps to setting up a review project on the Peer Review Portal:

- **Step 1: Project Info:** Fill in the relevant information for the course or unit of study under review, including the field of education and AQF qualification classification.
- **Step 2: Uploads:** Upload the relevant information for the unit of study or course, including student work samples. Institutions have the option of delegating applicants to upload the material onto the Portal. Make sure that each individual heading such as 'Course/Unit Outline/ which has an upload as a title as well. The Portal has an automatic feature which checks that all evidence is uploaded prior to submitting the review project for review. The Portal can most documents and file sizes. Online documents can be added through links. See Checklist of Evidence in Definitions for more information.
- **Step 3: Questionnaire:** Choose a template from the 'yes but no measure' and click on the selected template, 'Review of Assessment and Academic Integrity'. You can view the questions as a reviewer in 'Preview Questionnaire' and edit questions through clicking on 'Edit Questions'.
- **Step 4: Payment:** Fill in the billing information and either pay for the review project by credit card or by institutional credit. The review project needs to be paid for before Reviewers and Collaborators can be added.

Once these four steps are completed, the project will display 'Complete Project Setup'. The project configuration will be locked, and you will be unable to upload any additional documents or change the questionnaire. Once the Project Setup is complete, you will then have the opportunity to invite Collaborators and Reviews, and view the data submitted by the reviewers.

Review Reports: Once reviewer/s have completed the review project, institution coordinators and/or project owners can download reports either identified or de-identified. Reports can be individual reports or a summary report of all reviewers' comments.

7. Information for reviewers

The questions that will be used for the review projects, are also listed under Relevant Definitions. Reviewers will receive an email invitation to undertake the review project.

Reviewers will receive training from the institutional coordinator and/or national coordinator on the key points for external peer review. Review projects will be open for two-three months to give reviewers time to undertake the review.

8. Discussion on review reports and action

Institutional coordinators can discuss review reports with their disciplinary teams and identify areas for improvement or action. The Unit Coordinator undertakes the necessary actions and completes the action section on the Peer Review Portal. It is also useful to have discussions with reviewers once the review projects have been completed to build collaboration and expertise across the sector.

A consensus calibration activity will take place at the Peer Review Workshop so that academics are provided with a professional learning opportunity to discuss assessment and achievement standards.

The Peer Review Workshop can also benchmark disciplinary groups using the QILT data to inform on areas of good practice across institutions and disciplines.

Report Dispute: Disputes against a review report should be raised with the institution coordinator and national coordinator. It is at the discretion of the institution coordinator to seek another reviewer for the review report. There is also an opportunity for a mediated discussion with the reviewer/s to discuss the key issues in the report.

Payment to Reviewers: Institutions can nominate to pay reviewers, but this is an individual decision by the institution. Examples of payment include reviews for professional accreditation or preparation for course accreditation.

The Peer Review Portal can be used as a **Review Management System to support institutional reviews.** Curtin University are using the Portal for their Curriculum Analysis, Review and Renewal Process (CARR). Go to: http://clt.curtin.edu.au/teaching_learning_services/course_review/course_review.cfm

Reports can be used for course accreditation and professional accreditation: External referencing reports can be used as evidence for course accreditation and professional accreditation and submitted to institutional academic committees as evidence of external referencing of standards.

9. Other resources

- **External Review of Assessment: A Guide to Supporting the External Referencing of Academic Standards** Go to: <https://hdl.handle.net/1959.7/uws:53024>
- Peer Review of Assessment Networks: Sector-wide options for calibrating and assuring achievement standards within and across disciplines and other networks. Go to: <https://ltr.edu.au/>

10. Relevant Definitions

Consensus moderation	Consensus moderation is any process broadly defined as peer review that results in 'calibration' and 'consensus' being achieved. The 'moderation' bit is the change in the views of participants that is needed to reach the consensus. The consensus bit is peer agreement. This is more than a mere accommodation like 'agree to disagree', it's a genuine change to a common position (i.e. Calibration) Duncan Nulty (2017)
Assessment task	means a component of assessment that is normally based on learning undertaken during the semester. Assessment tasks can be formative or summative and can take many forms.
Benchmarking	Consists of focused improvement through collaboration with a benchmarking partner or partners, but can also include comparisons against publicly available data [for example, QILT data, attrition, retention, completion rates]
Collaborators	Collaborators on the Peer Review Portal have the same rights as Project Owners and can access reports. They can be added to review projects and in turn can add other collaborators and reviewers.
Capstone unit	means a final year unit that purposefully integrates, synthesizes and applies the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course in a consolidated assessment. This may be a work placement, project, thesis, portfolio or test.

Checklist of Evidence and Uploads	<p>For external review of assessment, the checklist of evidence below needs to be collected and uploaded onto the Peer Review Portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Context Statement: This clearly explains the purpose of the review and provides some context around the unit of study and the specific focus of the review [e.g. focus on design of assessment task only]. ▪ Unit Outline ▪ Course learning outcomes (CLOs) and course mapping ▪ Assessment schedule with each assessment item mapped against the CLOs ▪ Evidence of validity, reliability and flexibility of assessment items. For e.g. a report on students' post-course performance, minutes from course review, minutes from assessment moderation meeting, a report on assessment reliability, a student feedback report and assessment rubrics ▪ Three examples of student work samples which have been de-identified. In the case of student work samples that identify students, permission needs to be sought from the student to use for quality assurance purposes. The sample of student work will include: one sample below a pass, one sample just above a pass and another higher grade such as Distinction or High Distinction. ▪ Evidence of plagiarism outcomes and academic integrity processes
Core unit	means those units that are compulsory for, and directly address the learning outcomes of, the award course.
Course	means a formally approved/accredited program of learning that leads to the award of a qualification.
De-identify	The process of removing information from student samples provided. This includes removing student names, marker names, and any information that may identify persons or organisations other than the institution.
Disciplinary standards and threshold learning outcomes	Threshold learning outcomes for each discipline. See: https://ltr.edu.au Some examples of national reports and resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards: Final Report (2015) ▪ Assessing the assessments: evidencing and benchmarking student learning outcomes in Chemistry: Final Report (2018) ▪ Good practice guide: Threshold learning outcomes for agriculture (2016) ▪ Setting the Standard: Establishing threshold learning outcomes for Tourism, Hospitality and Events Higher Education in Australia Final Report (2016) ▪ Assuring learning and teaching standards through inter-institutional peer review and moderation: A user guide and handbook (2014) ▪ Good Practice Guide: Science: Threshold Learning Outcome 1: Understanding Science (2013)
Questions on review of assessment and academic integrity	The questions which will be used for each review project will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are the Unit Learning Outcomes aligned with the relevant Course Learning Outcomes? ▪ Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate at the AQF level? ▪ Does the assessment task/s enable students to demonstrate attainment of the relevant ULO's and relevant CLOs? ▪ Is the description of the performance standards (e.g. marking guide, marking criteria, assessment rubric, annotated work samples) appropriate to the specified ULOs and CLOs? ▪ Do you agree that the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment? ▪ Do you consider the assessment items submitted can confirm and validate the relevant CLOs and ULOs? ▪ What evidence of academic integrity processes were found in the relevant unit/course outline? ▪ In cases of a breach of academic integrity, what suggestions would you make in the revision of the assessment design and task?
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 intended learning outcomes and includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning.
Feedback	In the context of assessment, it is information which is returned to students on their progress towards unit/program of learning outcomes. Information can be quantified in the form of marks or grades for assessment tasks, and/or in qualitative form, for example, comments, model answers and suggestions for reading. All assessment should incorporate both formative and summative feedback for students (assessment for learning and assessment of learning).
Grade	A symbol that indicates the level of student performance in a unit against specified standards. Grades are awarded for the purposes of summative assessment.
HES Framework	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
Institutions	Higher Education Providers
Institutional coordinators	The role of the institution coordinator is to support their disciplinary team in undertaking the external review of assessment process as well as act as a mediator when any appeals are made. They also liaise with the national coordinator and other institutional coordinators to ensure the external referencing process is streamlined, sustainable and efficient.
Learning outcomes	A statement of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.
Mark	The points awarded for an individual item of assessment.
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	A formal agreement between one or more institutions to undertake a specific activity.
National coordinator for external referencing	The role of the national coordinator is to liaise with each individual institution, supporting them with external referencing activity, including regular meetings and professional support on how to use the Peer Review Portal, so that each institution meets the external referencing requirements in a timely manner.
Professional accreditation	A formal process of assessing a course against professional or industry standards.
QILT	Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching in Australia.
Review applicants	Review applicants are responsible for uploading their self-review material onto the Portal, so that their review project can be reviewed.
Reviewers	Reviewers are invited to undertake a review project on the Peer Review Portal. Reviewers can also be searched by field of expertise on the Peer Review Portal.
Rubric	means a type of matrix that provides scaled levels of achievement or understanding for a set of criteria or dimensions of quality for a given type of performance.
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)	means the national regulator for the Australian higher education system.
Unit	A single component of a qualification, or a stand-alone unit, that has been approved/accredited. A unit may also be called a module, subject or paper.
Unit coordinator	The academic staff member responsible for the unit for the semester it will be reviewed.
Unit outline	An official statement describing: The nature of the unit; the learning outcomes of the unit; how the unit is delivered and assessed; the specific requirements students have to meet in order to complete the unit successfully; information specific to the unit; and the resources required.