INTERNAL MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT IN AN ITP SECTOR INSTITUTION: TRANSLATING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

by

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DECLARATION

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This Dissertation entitled

Internal Moderation of Assessment in an ITP Sector Institution: Translating Policy into Practice

is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of

Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Principal Supervisor: **Dr Josephine Howse**

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Candidate's declaration

I confirm that:

- This Dissertation represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2019-2003

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of 'quality' as a key focus of educational leadership reflects current international trends in educational management that place policy emphasis on improvements to quality assurance and accountability. Moderation of assessment has come to embody this emerging policy focus and plays an increasingly important role within tertiary sector quality assurance systems.

This small scale qualitative study drew on a case study research framework to investigate the perceptions and experiences of lecturers and moderators who are implementing the internal moderation policy of an undergraduate programme at an ITP sector institution. This research investigated issues associated with the translation of moderation policy into practice, particularly the underlying practitioner values and the associated practice challenges and tensions. The research method utilised was semi-structured face to face interviews with six lecturers/moderators.

The research found evidence of a complex and distinct moderation culture among practitioners in the School that is supported by a range of values that underpin the approach. Strong support was found for moderation as an academic quality assurance process, along with resistance to a focus on compliance, and there was also found to be an aspiration for moderation to support and drive improvements to the student experience and learning outcomes. It was found that practitioners rated the skills, experience, knowledge and workload capacity of moderators to be the key factor in determining the effectiveness of moderation, with policy playing a less important, supporting role. A range of challenges to effective practice are outlined, including the identification of policy tensions related to the recognition and management of moderator workloads and professional development. This research highlights the complexities and challenges for educational leaders in the development and implementation of effective moderation policy, which needs to recognise and support the diversity of a positive moderation culture within an institute, while resolving the tensions that are inherent in achieving a balance between quality assurance and supporting teaching and learning.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

EER: External Evaluation and Review by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

ITP: Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics

LAC: Legislation Advisory Committee

QA: Quality Assurance

TQM: Total Quality Management

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND

This small scale qualitative study draws on a case study research framework to focus on the topic of moderation of assessment by investigating the perceptions and experiences of six lecturers when implementing internal assessment moderation policy in an undergraduate programme at their tertiary institution.

The emergence of 'quality' as a key focus of educational leadership reflects current international trends in educational management that place policy emphasis on improvements to quality assurance and accountability. It is reflective of what Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) refer to as a contract between the government and the institution. The increasing importance of moderation reflects this focus on accountability, as it is a "quality assurance process that plays a central role in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle in higher education institutions" (Beutel, Adie & Lloyd, 2014, p. 20).

Bloxham, Hughes and Adie (2016) note that "the term 'moderation' in the higher education sector has generally referred to post-judgement processes undertaken to negotiate agreement of grades", but now increasingly refers to "a broader concept of moderation as a cyclic process" (p. 639).

The focus of my research is on assessment moderation policy and policy implementation, because I believe that this reflects an increasingly important field of knowledge for many contemporary educational leaders in tertiary education. They are tasked with satisfying critical responsibilities for educational quality at the same time as achieving these responsibilities through more effective distributed forms of management.

1.2   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem has been identified because of different approaches to organisation policy related to internal moderation and inconsistencies of practice within the institution subject to this research. A recent external evaluation of the institution highlights the research problem by raising concerns over quality assurance deficiencies in several courses.

This research follows an earlier literature review which identified that the issue of effective moderation practice is an emerging issue in the tertiary sector. This research will therefore examine assessment moderation issues that have been highlighted by recent literature within a case study of a specific undergraduate degree programme in one tertiary institution.

1.3   RATIONALE

Merriam (2009) identifies a broad rationale for engaging in research as contributing to knowledge in a field (pure research), improving the practice in a particular discipline (applied research), assessing the value of something (evaluation research) or addressing a particular localised problem (action research) (p. 4). As educational research should fundamentally be concerned with the core business of education, it is intended that the outcomes of the study will expand the educational knowledge base by compiling background information pertinent to any potential future review of moderation policy.

This research examines assessment moderation issues that have been highlighted by recent literature within a case study of an undergraduate degree programme. The study by Adie, Lloyd, and Beutel (2013) is notable for clarifying a 'typology' of four practitioner views on moderation, which provide insight into the drivers of contemporary moderation practice, which they termed "discourses of moderation" (p. 968). There is also a growing body of literature which investigates moderation and is contributing to a greater understanding of what constitutes effective current practice. A key element of the research is to investigate the perceptions of lecturers involved in the internal moderation process and to consider the principles of effective policy writing

and implementation as a means to promote and enable effective moderation processes.

My research focuses on internal moderation of assessment practice within an undergraduate programme with over three hundred students in a New Zealand Institute of Technology. Fundamentally this research proposes to examine and analyse the relevant policy provisions and explore what the practitioners do in the reality of practice. This study focuses on assessment moderation policy at a school level, rather than moderation practice at the course level. Nonetheless, consideration of practice issues and policy implementation challenges is considered necessary to assist understanding the effectiveness of current policy to achieve the desired outcomes.

The main body of this research project was undertaken over a six month period between March and November 2019. The study stages included developing and refining the research proposal; obtaining research ethics approval from the relevant approval committees; data collection, including planning and executing interviews; data analysis; and report writing. The primary research method is semi-structured face to face interviews with six lecturers who are also experienced moderators to investigate the perceptions of lecturers involved in the internal moderation process and to consider the principles of effective policy writing and implementation.

The research has the potential to directly benefit stakeholders in the moderation process, including the wider Institution, lecturing staff, programme leaders and academic quality staff, by either validating the existing situation or by 'starting conversations' over future practice improvements. Finally, and most significantly, the research outcomes have the potential to indirectly benefit student learning outcomes.

1.4   RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The key aims of the research were:
1.   To examine key expectations for moderation policy;
2.   To investigate the practice of internal moderation from the perspectives of lecturers;

3. To examine the challenges experienced by lecturers during the internal moderation process.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are the key expectations for moderation policy?
2. What is the practice of internal moderation from the perspectives of lecturers?
3. What are the challenges experienced by lecturers during the internal moderation process?

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

My dissertation is organised into five main chapters which set out the following content:

Chapter One - Introduction

In chapter one I have introduced the research topic and set the scene for the research study by introducing the background to the research topic prior to these matters being investigated further in the literature review. I have also set out the rationale for the study and stated the key research aims and questions.

Chapter Two – Literature review

In chapter two I have presented a review of literature which is relevant to the research topic and aims. The literature review is organised into three key themes. These themes are: effective policy writing and implementation; purposes and principles of quality assurance and assessment moderation; and identifying and overcoming challenges to the implementation of moderation policy.

Chapter Three - Methodology

In chapter three I have set out the rationale for selecting a qualitative approach to my research methodology. I have also set out the details and rationale for the data collection method which is individual face-to-face interviews. I have also explained how I have addressed ethical issues through a planned approach to the design of the research and how the methodology has provided for the validity of research data. Finally, I have set out the limitations to my research.

Chapter Four - Findings

In this chapter I have presented the key findings from the data collected through the individual interviews. I have presented my findings to reflect themes that emerged during the data analysis phase of the research. These themes are: the purposes and principles of moderation; the effectiveness of policy; and practice challenges. The findings have then been consolidated into a summary, which provides a holistic view of the issues.

Chapter Five – Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations.

In this chapter I have drawn on pertinent matters from the literature review and data from the individual interviews to lead a discussion of findings in order to consolidate the research and reach conclusions. Finally, I have made recommendations for future implementation and set out matters which might be suitable for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This literature review is intended to compile a sound and consistent basis for the data collection and analysis phases of the study.   The focus of my research is on assessment moderation policy and policy implementation because I believe that this reflects one contemporary trend for educational leaders, which increasingly focuses on achieving effective methods of indirect forms of management. The literature review process therefore examined theories of academic quality, key principles of moderation practice, moderation policy implementation and the issues of effective educational policy.   The literature review themes are related to effective moderation policy (eg. writing and implementation); the principles of quality assurance and assessment moderation; and challenges to the implementation of moderation policy.

2.2   THEME 1: EFFECTIVE POLICY WRITING AND IMPLEMENTATION

This theme relates to policy interpretation, writing and implementation in order to establish background principles for the study of the existing policy. This theme relates to the first aim of my research by studying a broad view of expectations of educational policy and specifically policy relating to quality assurance.

Before commencing a research project related to the effective application of policy to promote assessment moderation within an Institution, it is necessary to first consider the literature which explores the nature of policy writing, analysis and implementation in an educational context.   Bell and Stevenson (2006) note that it is best to "conceptualise policy as a programme of action, or a set of guidelines that determine how one should proceed given a particular set of circumstances" (p.14). Policy often takes the form of formal written guidelines, for instance legislation, regulation and standards including those that directly and indirectly influence educational leadership.

It is important to consider the high level theories related to the process of policy development and implementation as understanding the underlying purpose and principles of policy is a necessary task in perceptive policy analysis.   Bell and Stevenson (2006) present a hierarchical model which conceptualises four key levels

in translating policy into practice (p.13). The stage most important to my research topic is identified as Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation. In terms of Policy Formulation, educational policy is seen as being derived from wider socio political discourse and mediated through the formulation of strategic direction at a macro scale. In terms of Policy Implementation, these factors in turn generate organisational principles.

As previously noted, it is recognised that a comprehensive understanding of the context of an Institution's moderation policy will be necessary, including analysis of the values and principles behind it. Bell and Stevenson (2006) identify the research of Kogan as important by suggesting the "four key values that underpin and inform educational policy - educational, social, economic and institutional values … with educational, social and economic values being considered as instrumental, or basic, and institutional values being considered as consequential or secondary" (as cited in Bell and Stevenson, 2006, p.15).

All tertiary institutions need to interpret and create policy for the purpose of effectively mandating and promoting quality assurance processes. Bell and Stevenson (2006) note, "it may be worth highlighting that analysis of the policy text is not a simple and straightforward activity" (p. 12). A number of common legal principles in New Zealand are useful when considering policy writing and analysis, albeit optional for the interpretation of educational policy at the institution level. The Legislation Advisory Committee (2014) set out guidelines for interpretation, which state that words used should have their ordinary meaning, unless the context of the policy dictates otherwise: "Generally words in an enactment will be given their natural or ordinary meanings. However, an Act must be read as a whole ... and the overall scheme of the Act will sometimes call for a different interpretation" (p.46).

In setting out a practical tool to guide educational leaders in the analysis of educational policy, Cardno (2018) emphasises that policy context can be a critical consideration, arguing that "it is important to … establish not only what is said but also what is not said" and that the researcher "should be able to distinguish clearly between what is content description and what is being inferred" (p. 633).

In analysing the content of education policy, Ryan (1994) provides succinct guidance to interpretation and the writing of policy documents and in particular, advocates a comprehensive policy structure which enhances its meaning and effectiveness. Ryan (1994) suggests that clearly incorporating four key components will help to make policy clearly understandable and help to legitimise policy for practitioners. Those four parts are a statement of the need for a policy; a statement of the values or principles that should be brought to bear; a statement as a 'guide for discretionary action'; and a statement of expected outcomes (p. 30). Ryan (1994) further notes that policy should be transparent in order to improve its perceived 'legitimacy' to practitioners, who are then more likely to both accept and champion the policies implementation.

The Legislation Advisory Committee (LAC) (2014) guidelines are consistent with the views of Ryan (1994), by requiring "internal coherence" to legislative documents, and stating that "each new Act should have a purpose provision and ... a clear purpose or policy objective that is adequately reflected in the provisions of the Act and any explanatory material" (p. 46).

The role played by educational leaders in setting and promoting assessment moderation policy is central to my research project. Bell and Stevenson (2006) refer to the key roles of educational leaders "as both policy implementers and policy generators" (p.9), who are required to analyse, implement and write policy. Furthermore, Busher and Barker comment that "leaders are mediators of the social and curriculum contexts of schools for staff, student and parents to make teaching and learning relevant and appropriately differentiated" (as cited in Busher, 2006, p.12). When emphasising the need for educational leaders to develop policy skills, Cardno (2018) argues that "deepening an understanding of policy beyond superficial engagement with the text can be useful when communicating a policy, managing its implementation and reviewing it". (p. 629)

2.3   THEME 2. PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT MODERATION

The emergence of 'quality' as a key focus of educational leadership is key to understanding the importance of assessment moderation in educational policy. This theme relates to the purposes and principles of quality assurance in education. It also considers principles of assessment moderation including philosophical approaches with underlie key differences in approach. This theme relates to the first and second aims/questions of my research by reviewing the philosophical purposes of quality assurance and the range of views that exist towards assessment moderation policy.

Quality can be defined in various ways, although meeting or exceeding customer expectations is a frequently used term. Evans (as cited in Brown, 2013) identified the general principles of quality including continuous improvement; teamwork; empowerment; use of data and facts for decision making; problem solving; and customer satisfaction.

Sallis (2002) states that quality assurance differs from quality control as it is about designing quality into the productive process to prevent faults occurring in the first place.   This author asserts that "quality standards are maintained by following the procedures laid down in the Quality Assurance (QA) System", which "is the responsibility of the workforce, usually working in quality circles or teams, rather than the inspector, although inspection can have a role to play in quality assurance" (Sallis, 2002, p.17). Total Quality Management (TQM) incorporates quality assurance and extends it with a strong focus on customer service.

Applying concepts of quality to the educational setting raises the conceptual ambiguity over what is meant by the term 'quality' in education which Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) refer to as "the problematic nature of quality" (p.4). Whereas Sallis (2002) notes that "for the purposes of analysing quality", the institution needs to define clearly the services it is providing and the standards to which they will be delivered" (p. 21). Customer satisfaction is often identified as central to concepts of service quality. With respect to education services, Sallis (2002) suggests that assessing customer satisfaction "needs to be carried out in conjunction with all its customer groups, including discussions with governors, parents, and with industry directly or via local

education business partnerships" (p 21). An institution can also view internal stakeholders as being 'customers' whose views should also be considered.

In addressing the wide ranging needs and views of the various customer groups, potential and actual conflicts of customer interest will always exist. Sallis (2002) suggests that all stakeholders need to have their views listened to and that "one of the best methods of resolving different interests is to recognize their existence and to look for the core of issues that unite the various parties" (p. 22). This author continues that this conflict is "very difficult issue to resolve", but "what it does is to ensure that the institution's processes keep the learners' views centre stage" (p. 22)

In the New Zealand experience, an international 'neo-liberal' policy agenda dominated by free market ideology was an overriding central government policy influence on education from the mid-1980's driving the devolution of many educational responsibilities from direct government control to self-managing institutions. Subsequent governments have watered-down the free market ideology by reintroducing government oversight through policy restrictions on the autonomy of institutions. As a result, institutions currently remain largely self-governing, but operate under a regime of mandatory policies for monitoring and reporting of quality which have been introduced by central government to maintain a degree of control over the quality of education that these organisations provide.

This reflects the current trends in educational management that place policy emphasis on improvements to quality assurance and accountability and is reflective of what Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) refers to as a "contract". In the context of assessment moderation this notional 'contract' is between the government, who provide the funds to operate the institution, and a Council who govern the institution on behalf of the community. In this way the government retains an element of delegated control by imposing a minimum framework of quality control and accountability on the institution.

Middlewood and Cardno (2001) comment on the international trends towards self-management of schools and identify the association between accountability and trends in teacher performance appraisal. They assert that, "in countries where self-management is well developed, schools must now make their own management

decisions about the quality of teaching and learning and how this can be improved" (p.7). The increased focus on accountability in educational policy has resulted in greater demands on institutions to implement formal monitoring and provide evidence of quality assurance outcomes. One of the key methods that has emerged to monitor and document quality systems in higher education, while maintaining independence of the institution, is through the assessment moderation system.

Boyd and Bloxham (2007) refer to "compelling research evidence" for the increasing importance of assessment in contemporary higher education as giving rise to the "primacy of assessment" as "it shapes the experience of students and influences their behaviour more than the teaching they receive" (p.3). The same authors further note evidence of the variable quality of assessment in UK higher education institutions and that "university assessment practice lags well behind its equivalent in the school sector" (p.3). This gives rise to a readily apparent conflict between the high expectations of learners and the limited capacity of institutions to satisfy increasing levels of scrutiny of their assessment practice.

In the UK context, Boyd and Bloxham (2007) recognise that "the contemporary environment of higher education means that assessment cannot carry on unaltered; it is subject to too many pressures and influences which create a force for change" (p.4). These authors identify a myriad of compelling pressures to improve assessment practice, many of which appear relevant to New Zealand tertiary education. These include an increasing demand from students and industry for perceived quality of learning outcomes and the mandatory influence of government policy in relation to quality assurance and accountability.

Moderation is a "quality assurance process that plays a central role in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle in higher education institutions" (Beutel, Adie & Lloyd, 2014, p. 20). The process of moderation in higher education is usually governed by institution policies and practices, but in some countries, including New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, it is a mandatory requirement of government policy. Bloxham, Hughes and Adie (2016) note that "the term 'moderation' in the higher education sector has generally referred to post-judgement processes undertaken to

negotiate agreement of grades", but now increasingly refers to "a broader concept of moderation as a cyclic process" at many institutions (p. 639).

The study by Adie, Lloyd, and Beutel (2013) is notable for clarifying a 'typology' of four practitioner views on moderation, which provide insight into the drivers of contemporary moderation practice, which they termed "discourses of moderation" (p. 968). The aim of that study was to investigate existing moderation approaches and understandings in an Australian teacher education faculty, with a view to promote more efficient and effective moderation practices. Their research identified four fundamentally different approaches that academics took to moderation by the predominant discourses that were: moderation as equity; moderation as justification; moderation as community building and moderation as accountability.

Using this understanding, it is possible to show how practices within organisations respond to different contextual features, differing perceptions and differing desired outcomes while having an outward appearance of compliance. Underlying the findings, Adie et al. (2013) conclude that moderation was viewed by some as an, "accountability measure while other participants viewed moderation in terms of being a way to support learning" (p.975).

Moderation as equity is deemed by Adie et al. (2013) to be synonymous with notions of consistency and fairness to students in terms of the consistency of judgment in awarding grades and the accuracy and consistency of information being provided to students about the assessment in the early part of their course (p. 973). This view of moderation is supported by Bloxham (2009) who notes that "moderation is a process for assuring that an assessment outcome is valid, fair and reliable and that marking criteria have been applied consistently" (p. 212).

Adie et al. (2013) also found that the discourse titled 'moderation as justification' was related to confidence in making decisions on student work, providing quality feedback and supporting consistent feedback to student enquiries. In addition to student confidence in the justification of grades, moderation as justification provided academics with confidence in the decisions that they had made and enables more helpful feedback to students on the quality of their work. This discourse reflects the

subjective aspects of marking. While assessment criteria and grade descriptors can introduce varying degrees of objectivity, Bloxham (as cited by Adie et al., 2013) characterises marking decisions as a "matter of professional judgment, and not a matter of fact" (p. 217).

Adie et al. (2013) identify "moderation as community building" as "typified by conversations of collaborative establishment and review of assessment tasks, criteria, standards, learning experiences, and teaching strategies" (p. 974). They commented on the effort that is made to "purposefully to involve the entire teaching team in discussions that started with the assessment design and culminated in the marking of the assessment and forward planning to the following semester" (p. 974). Developing shared knowledge of standards is understood as being "created through a social process involving dialogue and experience" (Bloxham, 2009, p. 218). Moderation as community building was also identified as having an influence on the induction and mentoring of new staff. These authors identified a number of challenges with the approach: limited opportunities for discussion due to grade turnaround time limits; teaching team size; geographical location; and the involvement of sessional staff, for instance the need to limit the expense of sessional staff attending moderation meetings.

Moderation as accountability was also identified by Adie et al. (2013) as "typified by references to distribution of marks; and the unit coordinator as standard setter, final arbiter and expert" (p. 974).   This sense of accountability was also noted as incorporating challenges, such as the need for the distribution of marks to be more deeply understood "as only part of the story" of a tutor's judgement, and that "other factors must be considered before grades are adjusted" (p. 975).

In their conclusion, Adie et al. (2013) make a number of observations pertinent to the leadership of assessment moderation, noting "that moderation practice is currently an idiosyncratic mix of beliefs and experience espoused through one or more of the discourses, namely, equity, justification, community building and accountability" (p. 975). They caution that simplistic approaches to moderation should be avoided and that a balanced approach is needed to optimise results. The same authors comment further that leaders need to be "wary that we are not simply inducting staff into existing

practices that are based on one discourse of moderation" (p. 975). This diversity in assessment moderation highlights a policy conflict that educational leaders need to reconcile, in that policy needs to accommodate both the flexibility to enable valid practice variation with the need for compliant approaches to satisfying mandatory demands for quality assurance monitoring and reporting.

2.4   THEME 3.   IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MODERATION POLICY.

This theme seeks to examine the nature of challenges to the effectiveness of moderation as a quality assurance tool for the institution. This theme is inherently linked to practice and educational management issues. Issues associated with this theme include the effectiveness of related policies in promoting good practice, consistency of policy implementation and other resource and practice issues. This theme is related to the third aim of my research, to provide a literature base to assist with the analysis of interview data.

As noted previously, this study focuses on assessment moderation policy at an institution or school level, rather than moderation practice at the course level. Nonetheless, consideration of practice issues and policy implementation challenges are considered necessary to understand the effectiveness of current policy to achieve the desired outcomes.

In their paper, 'What's the Point of Moderation', Bloxham, Hughes and Adie (2016) considered the effectiveness of current moderation practice to achieve the desired educational outcomes, and conclude with recommendations for methods that maximise the potential of moderation practices to maintain quality assurance standards.

Bloxham et al. (2016) first recommend that moderation be integrated "into the whole teaching and assessment process with a particular emphasis on pre-teaching moderation; that is, moderation which is informed by, and informs, the learning design" (p. 649). This 'planned' approach to moderation was identified as crucial in overcoming log jams in post-assessment marking deadlines, which hindered the task of achieving

the desired "appropriate, consistent and fair standards" (p. 649). Early moderation discussion and scrutiny of assessment tasks is identified as being the "least well-developed method" (p. 649), but having "a range of potential benefits to both teachers and learners". Bloxham et al. (2016) identify the potential benefits which include more effective time management for collaborative work, improved consistency of understanding across a teaching team and consequently more clarity of communication with students. "In this scenario, end of course moderation could focus on close scrutiny of the hard borderline cases, with detailed examination and discussion of the students' work matched against the stated standards" (Bloxham, Hughes & Adie (2016) p. 649).

These authors continue to note that, "flipping the process so that most moderation effort is applied at the beginning of courses" is seen as enabling a process that "is more useful to students, likely to bring greater consistency in advice, and encourage an 'assessment for learning conversation' amongst staff" (p. 650). Prioritising moderation at a time in the academic calendar when there are fewer competing responsibilities was identified as providing practitioners with an opportunity to concentrate on going beyond the mandatory minimum requirements and to use the moderation process to achieve better learning outcomes.

An improved focus on professional development and calibration of standards was the second improvement recommended. Bloxham et al. (2016) recommend "dialogical, cross-university consensus moderation" that is part of the "well conducted and thoughtful moderation practices" and argue that this will "constitute professional learning and promote the enhancement of assessment design, as well as system-wide consistency of judgement and maintenance of standards" (p. 650). Such professional development is likely to be assisted by greater interactive moderation, for example, in assessment exemplars or discussing marks and criteria. These authors emphasise that, "the 'point' of moderation ... is most clearly understood when practices move beyond accountability to inform teaching and enhance student learning opportunities" (p. 650).

Grainger, Adie and Weir (2016) researched the impact that the 'casualisation' of academic staff had on moderation practice at an Australian institution. They conclude

that securing consistency in judgement by sessional staff was problematic, "particularly when there is a high turnover of staff in a course" (p. 557). These outcomes were consistent with another study of an Australian Nurse training institution (Scott, Ewens and Andrew, 2013), which revealed variation amongst markers, which could be attributed most significantly to the large number of new and sessional academic staff with marking responsibilities. While exploring ways to mitigate the impacts of sessional staff on moderation practice, Grainger et al. (2016) found a number of factors to improve practice of sessional staff, such as providing clear protocols and procedures for moderation processes and meetings.

Scott et al. (2013) also found that quality improvement of the moderation process could be achieved by implementing a user friendly procedure based on current best practice and achievable using existing systems. The moderation process that was developed to meet these requirements included "clear steps, each with defined purpose underpinned by an ongoing, continuous and collaborative review with improvements to be incorporated into subsequent semesters" (p. 26). In this case the policy was accompanied by flow-charts to illustrate the process.

Views on challenges to moderation policy implementation provide an interesting background, when considered in the light of guidance to good policy writing. For example, Ryan (1994) suggests that a 'discretionary action' section be incorporated to add optional matters, which could improve the transparency of policy for teaching and administrative staff who are ultimately responsible for its implementation. The 'discretionary action' section encouraged by Ryan implies a method through which policy can retain crucial flexibility, yet incorporate 'best practice' guidance to achieve its stated purpose of improving teaching and learning outcomes, rather than merely achieving the minimum reporting standards.

2.5   SUMMARY

This chapter on the review of research literature has presented an overview of theories of academic quality, the key principles of moderation practice, and the issues associated with effective educational policy. This provides the background to the research questions and provides a framework for this research project. The following chapter describes the study methodology and the research method adopted.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A key consideration in developing this research methodology is to have a clear vision of the epistemological position which underlies the research. This research is most closely aligned with interpretivism, which Bryman (2012) notes "requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (p. 18). The nature of my study is focussed on collecting subjective data which is most suitable for qualitative analysis. Merriam (2009) notes that qualitative researchers are "interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). She further states that the inductive approach to qualitative research requires that "researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories" (p. 15). With respect to research outputs, it is noted that "the product of qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive" and likely to feature a combination of data such as descriptions, quotes from documents and excerpts from interviews and field notes in support of the findings of a study (p. 16).

This is a small qualitative research project of an individual case study undertaken in the context of an undergraduate programme in a school within the Institution of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector. Yin (2003) provides a technical definition of the scope of case studies being "an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when; the boundaries between context and phenomenon are not clearly evident" (p.13). This author argues that a case study is an appropriate strategy to address the 'how' and 'why' research questions when the researcher has little control over events and the focus is on "contemporary phenomena with real-life context" (p. 1). The context of the research is considered to be an interesting basis for the case study and is also likely to be representative of some moderation practices within other schools at the institution.

3.2   RESEARCH METHOD – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The primary research method that was utilised for this research is the semi-structured face to face interviews with six lecturers teaching on an undergraduate programme in a tertiary institution. Lichtman (2013) identifies "individual interviewing" as a term to

"describe a conversation with a purpose", with the structure of the format ranging from highly structured to casual, with guided semi-structured and in-depth interviews (p.118). Interviews were selected as the source of primary qualitative research data, as the approach tends to produce more insightful and in-depth data than other forms of survey and is therefore most useful to answering the research questions.

The guided semi-structured interview approach involved developing a general set of questions and format which is followed less rigidly than in a structured interview. Lichtman (2013) indicates that this is the format often used by novice interviewers (p. 120). In recognition that the researcher is a novice interviewer, it was considered prudent to take a semi-structured approach to the individual face to face interviews, so as to allow for good insight from the participants' responses, whilst also ensuring control over the validity and reliability of the interview data.

Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that the most practical way of achieving greater validity of interview data "is to minimise the amount of bias as much as possible" with the main sources being "the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions" (p. 204). To minimise bias some literature encourages a more highly structured approach to the interview, while other literature raises a counter argument that this should not unduly limit the ability of respondents to demonstrate their point of view. Indeed, Lichtman (2013) cautions against excessively structured interview techniques for qualitative research purposes, as although they can improve objectivity of interview data this is seen as being at the expense of the deeper and more meaningful responses.

3.3.1 Interview Sampling:

This research took place in an Institute of Technology and the participants were six lecturers drawn from one academic school. The selection of suitable participants for the interview stage followed a deliberate selection strategy, to ensure that participants had a substantial first-hand involvement and past experience in multiple aspects of the moderation practice of the institution.

When determining the appropriate number of participants in a sample size, Lichtman (2013) argues that there are no firm rules for qualitative research, and that this is more

a matter of judgement, but often "depends on how much variation there is in a population and how much sampling error you are willing to accept" (p. 122). The undergraduate programme subject to my research offers about 20 courses during one semester and has approximately 20 permanent lecturers. The research relied on an interview sample size of six key lecturers, who have good experience of the moderation of multiple courses through multiple moderation cycles, as either moderator or course co-ordinator. Overall, the selected interview sample was estimated to have collective experience in moderation of approximately 80% of the School's courses. As well as coverage of a good sample of courses, the participants were also selected as being most likely to be able to reflect knowledgably on their wide current and past experience across multiple roles and courses, such as their own previous experiences as both novice and senior staff, and therefore produced high quality interview data. This sample was considered to be sufficient to produce a comprehensive scope of variation in perspectives and represent an insightful range of observations.

3.3.2 Interview Schedule

The researcher followed Lichtman's advice with respect to a carefully planned approach to the interview itself, to help ensure the successful coordination of the interview process (Lichtman, 2013, p. 216). The questioning strategies/techniques were carefully prepared to encourage each respondent to communicate in a revealing manner and produce quality results, while avoiding problems adversely impacting on research validity, such as leading questions, jargon or excessive 'chatter'.

During the interviews, the interviewer utilised an interview guide as a prompt to ensure appropriate questioning to cover the beginning, body and end of the interview and the post interview tasks. The interview questions were constructed to reflect the research questions and the main themes and issues identified from literature. There were approximately 10 broad questions (refer to Appendix 1).

The semi-structured interviews gathered data to help answer research questions two and three. The interview questions sought to investigate lecturer experience and perceptions regarding implementing institution policy. In addition, the interview questions also sought to establish what aspects of related formal policy the participants

viewed to be effective in equipping them with the guidance to carry out their tasks with high quality.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Merriam (2009) describes the process of data analysis as the transformative process in which raw data is turned into findings or results. She further elaborates that bits and pieces of information from interviews or documents are combined and ordered into larger themes while the researcher works from the particular to the general, as "qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field (p. 16). The selection of a qualitative approach allows the researcher to seek out general themes and make interpretations of the meaning of the data to form a final written report related to the original questions (Creswell, 2011).

The data analysis technique employed was thematic analysis, which generally followed the process set out by Saldana (2013), in his "streamlined codes to theory model for qualitative inquiry" (p. 13). The model represents the process of transforming raw data (real/particular) into the theoretical (abstract/general). Key stages in the process are the creation of codes (1-2 cycles), categories, concepts/themes and theories. The themes were predominantly emergent, and arose from the interview data.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Educational institutions take issues of ethics seriously at an organisational level and this research has been undertaken in accordance with formal policy and procedure. The ethical guidelines set out procedures that reinforce the ethics principles, including the need for research projects to be subject to supervision, a design approval process and suitable operating conditions. This research project has been subject to a formal ethics application for review and approval prior to commencing, which has ensured that ethical issues were considered at the earliest research design stage and that these concerns were 'designed-out'.

The focus of ethical issues in social science research is the people in a study and the need to protect them from "any possible harm – be this physical, mental, emotional or

financial" (Cardno, 2003, p. 56). This principle refers to the need for a researcher to take all measures necessary to ensure that research participants are not subjected to unnecessary risk of harm as a result of their participation. The Research Methodology implemented a number of measures to 'design-out' issues of potential Ethical 'risk'. These measures include:

Ethic issue	Methodology consideration
Harm Minimisation	Methodological considerations were guided by the key issue of harm minimisation, to ensure that research participants were not subjected to unnecessary risk of harm as a result of their participation, including physical, psychological, social or commercial harm. The highest risk of harm arising from the research was considered to be potential social harm to work relationships of individuals and potential harm to the reputation of the Institution. Confidentiality is therefore considered appropriate. The research design aimed to utilise the smallest number of participants that will ensure sufficient data.
Informed Consent	Written consent to take part was obtained from all participants in accordance with institution ethical requirements. Participants were supplied with sufficient information about the research to gain an understanding of the possible benefits and risks of involvement and were not pressured into participating. Similarly, organisational involvement was agreed by a person with authority to make such a decision. The Researcher also ensured that the interview transcripts were verified by participants.
Confidentiality	Participants are identified only by number in this published report and details were carefully edited to retain anonymity of their information. Raw interview data was treated as confidential. Participants were given a full explanation of what measures were to be taken to ensure confidentiality, including the identity of those who may have access to their information. Material will not be disclosed to a third party without permission, unless there is a legal need for disclosure.

Privacy	Privacy was discussed with the participants and agreed measures taken. Participants had the ultimate control over the timing and circumstances of their participation, including the date and location of interviews and input into how their data can be utilised.
Data storage	Raw interview data with participant information is securely stored on the researcher's computer. Data was only be used for the purpose for which it was collected. Upon final completion, a research report meeting confidentiality and privacy measures will be published on the website 'Resource Bank'. Research Ethics requires data to be kept for 5 years after completion of the research project, after which it will be destroyed.
Social and cultural sensitivity	The Researcher assessed potential issues of sensitivity among the participants, to ensure their wellbeing, and no issues of concern arose during this research.
Health and Safety	The researchers took all appropriate precautions to protect the personal health and safety of both the participants and themselves during interviews.

Once ethics approval was obtained, it was necessary for the research to be conducted in a manner which recognised the principle of informed consent. To achieve this, consideration was given to the preparation of an Information Sheet (Appendix 2) and ensuring that a Consent Form (Appendix 3) was signed before the interview started.

Cardno (2003) identifies the ethical principles related to the "checking of data with participants once it has been collected and also to the obligation to share the final report." (p.58). Related research tasks undertaken included implementing protocols for giving transcripts of interviews to participants for checking and to provide participants with access to the final project report, as part of a process to acknowledge their importance in the research project.

3.6   RESEARCH VALIDITY

A key characteristic of qualitative research is the researcher being the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 2009, p.15). The reliance on a human researcher has numerous advantages in the pursuit of qualitative research, but

also has "shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study" (p. 15). Merriam (2009) notes that these cannot be eliminated, but rather these "subjectivities" should be identified and monitored "as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (p. 15).

This research has been undertaken in accordance with principles of academic integrity required by the institution in which I am studying. The researcher has strived to apply an unbiased approach to all aspects of the research, for instance adopting a neutral position to preparing and undertaking interviews. The research is represented honestly and all data collected has been used in an unbiased manner, including results that might not represent the viewpoint of the researcher. Limitations and potential sources of bias in the research have been reported honestly and comprehensively.

3.7   RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

When conducting a research study it is important to be clear about limitations to the scope of the study. In this case it is noted that the research is a small scale case study and the outcomes and recommendations are not intended to be applied beyond the regulatory and physical context of the Institution subject to the research activity. The majority of data is expected to be institution specific in nature, and therefore I urge any reader to analyse the results cautiously when trying to find any wider relevance to the research outcomes.

It is acknowledged that this research took place at an institute to which the researcher has links and with participants who are previously known. I obtained the agreement of both the Chief Executive (CEO) of the Institute and the participants to undertake the research in an unbiased manner and I have strived to follow an ethical research protocol to adopt a neutral position during data collection and analysis. There has been no pressure from either the Institute or colleagues to influence the reported outcomes of this research. Nonetheless, this situation gives rise to a perceived potential conflict of interest, which I therefore declare in this report.

A further acknowledged limitation of this research is that it was not intended to conduct a full, critical examination of moderation practice and methodology at a detailed course level. In addition, it is noted that this research is not intended to directly produce comprehensive policy recommendations. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the outcomes could have a potential practical application, such as being a 'conversation starter' about the issues and providing an up to date information base to inform any potential further investigation of policy improvements within the Institution.

CHAPTER FOUR - FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data gathered from the interviews with six tertiary institute lecturers regarding internal assessment moderation and associated policy within their own institutional environment. The perspectives of the respondents are outlined under three themes that were identified from the interview data: Theme 1 – Purposes and Principles of Moderation; Theme 2 – Effectiveness of Policy; and Theme 3 – Practice Challenges. The findings are categorised in terms of those themes, and set out under a series of sub-headings, which have been derived from the thematic analysis of the interview data.

The research sample of six lecturers was small in scale, but purposively sampled in anticipation that a small group of highly experienced practitioners would produce interview data which is reflective and insightful. This chapter reflects the qualitative nature of the interview data, by presenting findings as a series of selected quotes from the six lecturers, who are coded L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6.

4.2   THEME 1 – PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION

This theme is discussed under the following sub headings: Importance of Moderation; Consistency and Fairness to Students; and Compliance versus Conversation.

4.2.1   THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERATION

All of the six lecturers indicated that moderation is important to ensure the quality of teaching on the degree programme. In terms of its overall importance in maintaining the quality of education at the school, the process of moderation was universally supported by participants, none of whom identified moderation as being unnecessary. Indeed, moderation was identified as being either very important or crucial by all participants.

One lecturer (L1) stated that moderation was "absolutely crucial" and "in spite of frequent difficulties, yes, it absolutely has to be compulsory." This is supported by L3 who noted that "it is the only process that I am aware of, that works to address the suitability of the assessment in line with the learning outcomes" and "you know ... it needs to be done." Meanwhile, another lecturer (L5) noted that moderation is "very important" and that "it is something the students can feel confident in ... that we are looking at all those things before they are given any assessments."

4.2.2 CONSISTENCY AND FAIRNESS TO STUDENTS

Opinions were sought from participants over what they viewed as being the most important roles of moderation in contributing to educational quality at the School. In contrast to the widespread agreement over the importance of moderation, a wider range of responses were received over the key roles of moderation.

The most commonly identified role of moderation by lecturers was to provide quality assurance related to the consistency of courses and course assessment, which was described by lecturers as encompassing a range of moderation tasks. While identifying consistency as the key objective of internal moderation, L5 noted the key considerations for pre-moderation which are to "ensure that the work to be assessed ... fits with the level of the course, that it fits with the learning outcomes of the course, that it's achievable in the time available" This lecturer also summarised the key consideration of post moderation as being to assess "whether there were any issues with students not having understood what work they are meant to be doing" or with any issues that came up from the assignment, that the moderator didn't pick up in pre-moderation.

A lecturer L2 agreed that consistency is a key role of moderation, and likened a lot of the role of the moderator to an impartial, independent quality check, where "the pre-moderation, (is) to make sure that it's clear, unambiguous and does what it's meant to do, meets the learning outcomes ... and also that there's no stupid mistakes." This lecturer elaborated on these views of the role of a moderator, noting that "in one way it's supporting the lecturer/course coordinator to make sure that there is consistency and quality and this thoroughness in the way the assessment is developed."

Meanwhile, L5 added that moderation minimises the chances of plagiarism, for example "ensuring that it's [a current assignment] not so similar to a previous assignment, whenever it was written." While elaborating on the importance of moderation for consistency, L6 observed, "I think the key role of moderation is to ensure that what the student experiences is what is intended by the course outcomes" with examples being "what they are being assessed on aligns with the learning outcomes, that it's the right level ... and it is of the right scale in terms of the expected time that they have to spend on it."

The issue of ensuring 'fairness' to students was identified by several lecturers as a key concept driving moderation. L5 argued, "I think that actually gives confidence to the students as well, if they know that we are moderating. It is not just one person's view about how to do this particular work." The same lecturer gave examples of fairness considerations, such as "using language people can understand, including for students without English as their first language as well, and yet still keeping to the technical terms one has to use." This lecturer also noted that fairness to students should be considered during assessment moderation, and commented, "it's really important to watch the grades and the grade boundaries... I mean give them what they deserve, not what it is quicker to do." Equity and fairness to students was also raised by L6, who noted you have to check that the difficulty of an assessment to a student "depends upon their own ability, but there's nothing inherently impossible for one student, but possible for another."

4.2.3 MODERATION AS COMPLIANCE VERSUS CONVERSATION

Another strong correlation of data was the agreement between six lecturers that the compliance function of moderation was a function that was either not valued by them or outright opposed. The issue with the moderation as compliance was commented on by L2, who noted, "I think the compliance is the least part of it, EER [external evaluation review] notwithstanding. I think it is about good assessment." L3 strongly objected to the notion of moderation as a compliance issue, insisting, "it's not a compliance issue - it is a quality assurance issue ... it should be about making sure the quality of the product is right, and so should not be about compliance."

Several other lecturers identified the role of the moderator as helping the course coordinator and lecturer, by providing a second expert opinion over the quality of the course. L2 explained that the "people who moderate my courses ... give you a sounding block as well, because they're going to look at what you're going to produce and it gives you an opinion - is there a better way of doing this?." This lecturer elaborated on the role of the Moderator as a reassuring colleague, stating, "you know you have a colleague who knows what you were delivering and what you are trying to achieve, and they can give you some feedback ... It is part of the conversation."

Meanwhile, L6 expressed a similar high regard for the conversation aspects of moderation, and further noted that it works well, "if you manage to develop a good relationship with the other lecturers, so that there is trust that both know their jobs, then you can have really good discussions about the assessments, and their outcomes". The lecturer continued that the process then, "goes away from just filling in the paperwork, to actually having true value to all those assessments. So I think that is probably one of the things, that I hold in high regard."

4.2.4 THEME 1 KEY FINDINGS

Interview responses provided insights into lecturer perceptions of the nature and purpose of moderation. Analysis of this data highlights some key similarities as well as interesting variations within the participant group. The Key Findings on the purposes and principles of moderation can be summarised as follows:

Key Finding 1: Importance of Moderation as a Quality Assurance Process

The findings indicate a strong common ground among lecturers who expressed a universal acceptance for moderation being a highly important quality assurance process at the School. This contrasted with an equally resolute resistance to the notion of moderation being a compliance driven activity.

Key Finding 2: Diversity of Moderation Values Within the School

The findings with respect to the underlying guiding values of practitioners to moderation found a range of views. Some lecturers emphasised a focus on consistency, equity and fairness to students as the key role and function of moderation at the school. Other lecturers identified moderation as a process which enables conversation and dialogue between practitioners, to improve teaching and learning. Irrespective of the underlying values, the findings also indicated the consistent prioritisation of teaching and learning matters over compliance tasks.

4.3   THEME 2 – EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY

This theme is discussed under the following sub headings: Role/Expectations of Policy in Moderation; Policy Familiarity; Policy Clarity and Other Policy Issues.

4.3.1 ROLE/EXPECTATIONS OF POLICY IN MODERATION

In identifying expectations over the contribution of policy to the moderation process, L2 argued that policy has a role to play in moderation, but it is not necessarily a key focus. This lecturer likened policy to, "a framework - it is a kind of scaffold and I think that we build from the scaffold; we don't fall back on it." The lecturer elaborated, "policy is there as a backstop - is there to make sure things do not slip through the cracks. It is not really there to improve the teaching." L2 elaborated on the importance of policy to moderation, noting "I think the policy is sufficient, and it is the scaffold for us to do the job, as long as we have the resources and the time and the right mind-set and the right approach."

While agreeing that policy can be a back-up to practice, L3 noted, "policy is supposed to be the guidelines on how to do that process … if there's a particular circumstance that you're not sure of, you can go back to that document make sure that you are on track." L3 further noted that policy may be "critical in that regard for people to go back to, but the key is actually getting people to take ownership."

Meanwhile L6 argued, "I think the policy only helps as long as the processes align with the policy. Beyond that, for a lecturer, it does not do much." The lecturer elaborated, "it creates a point and sends a message to every academic staff member that they have to think about these things when they're creating their teaching assessments - I think that's a useful milestone."

While making a comment on policy, L6 noted, "as a lecturer, I'm not sure we should necessarily know about them" [policy]. The lecturer elaborated that "at the lecturer level, you're down at a process, and I think the process that you are following within your School QA process should be built out of the policy." The lecturer continued that the role of connecting "the policy and the process should come from the academic leaders."

Meanwhile L5 argued that policy should be simplified, noting "I think it needs to be much simpler. I think it needs to be done like a checklist." L4 agreed, stating, "it is good that this [policy] exists at the background, but I think it is up to the Academic Leader to translate into our language, what is required ... and make it a very simple and clear picture." The lecturer elaborated that forms should guide the process and "for the course coordinator, that would be enough for them, just to look at the forms and know if these are OK."

Another lecturer (L2) observed that reliance on policy to guide practice was more important for newer staff, but that dependence on policy decreased with more lecturing and moderating experience. The lecturer noted, "it was useful, when I first started moderating and ... I was looking for every bit of structure that I could find." However, with increasing experience, L2 noted, "now I'm much more focused on improving the assessment than recording the process."

Describing some problems with new lecturers failing to deliver sufficient information to allow effective moderation, L6 noted that forms and procedures have potential to provide a useful prompt or checklist to guide practitioners, such as identifying the information which should be provided by the lecturer to a moderator, such as course descriptors and evidence aligning learning outcomes to assignments. The lecturer felt

that this would be an improvement, but "they [new lecturers] are not going to do it by just reading the form. They need training."

Commenting on the extent to which policy can achieve moderation outcomes, L6 argued that moderation outcomes are, "only as good as how thoroughly and how genuinely it's done." The lecturer elaborated, "you could also use this as a fairly superficial tick box exercise ... and so that is complying with a process, rather than really genuinely considering the quality." L6 concluded that a tick-box approach can mean practitioners do not, "meet the spirit of the document as well, and ... then there's a good chance you are just going through a compliance process that adds nothing to the activity."

Commenting that some aspects of moderation procedure can be perceived as bureaucratic and unnecessary, L2 questioned if it was "just documenting for the sake of documenting, so that we can show, the external, EER people or whatever that, yes, we follow the processes. Because that's kind of really depressing." The lecturer elaborated on issues with documentation, querying "who are we archiving things for, what is the purpose of it? That is the bit, that I don't quite understand" and stating, "I think we need a bit more thought about what [documentation] we give them and how we give it to them."

4.3.2 POLICY FAMILIARITY

As set out in detail earlier in this report, at the time the research interviews were conducted, the institution was in the process of introducing a new institution-wide moderation policy, which had been 'operative' for a single semester, as an option to continuing to use the School's well established internal procedure. All lecturers agreed, that for a number of reasons, their current preference was to implement school procedure over institutional procedure.

All six of the lecturers noted that they were less familiar with the institution policy than the school policy. A lecturer (L1) stated that the current policy was, "not widely distributed to lecturers at all. It is kind of assumed that you would go and find it and policy here is not easy to find." L1 elaborated, "in my experience … we follow the

School, because it seems to be more thorough than the institution moderation process." The lecturer gave an example: "we certainly had the 3-year cycle for course moderation by students, but every single summative assessment has its own moderation by a peer."

Whereas, L2 agreed that they were "much more familiar with the School procedures and documents, than the institutional one." L2 noted, "I think we pride ourselves on doing more than the institution requires. I think as a School, we have always been strong on moderation and we try to lead practice." The lecturer noted, "as a School, we are aware of the institutional requirement, but we develop them or advance them to suit what we want to achieve."

Meanwhile L3 explained, "the institutional policies are documents that sit in time and space, which people do not go to very often. But it is there and it is needed. It is the go-to document, when you're not sure." The lecturer continued, noting that the "value of a departmental version of it, is policy which is tailored to the departments needs, to allow for that deeper ownership and deeper engagement, so I think it has value." L3 explained, "you do not have to do that [have a school policy], as some schools might be quite happy just using the Institution framework."

While L5 agreed that "I do prefer the previous one" [school policy]. The lecturer identified a number of issues as examples of matters dealt with better by school policy, and argued, "if this is … [institution] trying to have a one thing fits all, it is quite naïve." The lecturer explained that the school "always had a very strong Quality Assurance process and procedures."

While raising the historic background to explain similarities between school and institute policy, L6 explained that "I think the history goes as … the School developed their own QA forms, long before there was an institutional policy and I am pretty certain the institutional forms here are strongly influenced by our own forms over time." The same lecturer further justified a preference for school forms over institute process, noting the school commitment to continuous improvements.

4.3.3 POLICY CLARITY

Most lecturers identified a lack of clarity to some specific policy requirements in the institute policy. L1 felt that the school policy "is slightly more thorough" the example being that policy "says some of the assessment moderation must occur at a regular basis at least every three years. We insist on doing it for every semester." L1 also identified some lack of clarity over terminology, noting, "there seems to be two different meanings to moderation here as far as I can see. One is the moderation of assessment and the other one is the moderation of the course."   The lecturer also noted "moderation of how the course is delivered using student feedback [is] a different type of moderation to course moderation or assessment moderation."

L1 identified the "section on the policy for assessment moderation of grades, I think it is very unclear … which doesn't give any guidance on what sort of moderation; how often; who; when those sorts of questions." The lecturer stated, "the implication could be that you could have your course assessment, your exam or whatever is moderated once every three years, and I think that would be deficient." L1 elaborated that policy and procedure "blur the distinction between a course assessment and an assessment of the course, and assessment of summative, which are quite different." The lecturer did acknowledge the potential for diversity of assessment in the institution, and that "other schools have to do it differently. And if that's the case, then you can go for less rather than more, in a policy."

Outlining some perceived lack of clarity around policy purposes, L2 stated, "I think the process itself is OK, but I think there needs to be more clarity in the purposes, of why we're doing it." Whilst acknowledging that some checklist items were useful, L2 further argued that the policy "may be a little bit too focussed on the compliance side. I think it has less of the assessment quality in them. It is much more about following the process and ticking the boxes."

Meanwhile L3 also identified the openness of a clause referring to "moderation on all summative assessments for courses must occur on a regular basis and at least every three years. That is very open."

L4 felt that policy "is quite clear" but also identified that institute policy was less clear than school procedure on certain matters, such as "it says moderation of all summative assessment /courses, so what does that mean, either/or? Also these are two different things." The lecturer concluded, "some things could be clearer with it."

While L5 identified references to some obsolete or irrelevant terminology, which should be corrected, such as noting, "assessments will reflect a standards based approach … that used to apply to New Zealand Diplomas, or National Diplomas I should say. It has never applied to the Degree". The lecturer concluded, "that is something they need to look at."

Whereas L6 recognised some blurring of terms, such as "are they talking about a moderation of a course or are they talking about moderation of an assessment event? And the first bits appear to be looking at courses, while the last bit is particularly about an assessment." This lecturer commented that there could be "a bit of clarity around the course or assessment moderation. There is the implication that internal moderation means moderation of assessment and external moderation means moderation of a course. It is an implication I think it could be clearer."

When commenting on procedure, L6 identified that the school is "aligning with all those procedures, and in fact we probably exceed them in that a moderation will be undertaken at least every three years - we would assess and moderate every single assessment every year". The lecturer cautioned that "I think that's good, as a lot could go wrong in 3 years" such as changes in staff and students.

4.3.4 OTHER POLICY ISSUES

Policy Prescriptiveness

There was some discourse among the lecturers when they were asked whether the policy was too vague or too prescriptive. L1 explained that "I am always in favour of less prescriptive, because I don't believe in one size fits all", but concluded that "I think the procedure is quite good as written."

When discussing perceived policy content weaknesses, L2 identified that "the pre-moderation which is fine, but it is the post moderation that I have problems with ... because effectively, it is re-marking, which I don't think that is the role of the moderator, other than in extreme cases." The same lecturer argued a preference for the policy being "possibly less detailed, because the more detailed you try to make it, the easier it is to leave stuff out, and frame things in a way that excludes novel practice or the way that people do things."

While L5 argued that the policy is "too prescriptive and impractical, sorry." The lecturer further noted:

> all we really need to do, I suggest, is literally have a moderator who you know, who has got the capacity and the credibility to actually act as a moderator, and that moderator is going to be checking that … the level of inquiry is the right level …; that it's doable in a reasonable amount of time, in the non-contact time; that it's on topics in terms of the learning outcomes; that you make sure that all learning outcomes are covered, either in the assignments or in the exam.

Policy Driven Process Assists or Detracts from Good Practice

A lecturer (L1) stated that course moderation, "tends to be something that is imposed externally ... and so all of a sudden you're losing up to half an hour of teaching space … and it may be at a completely inappropriate time, so that can be quite distracting." Meanwhile L5 identified that policy imposed unreasonable time demands on moderators, noting that policy allows for "five days, but it depends on how many in the cohort. If you have got a very big cohort, you're going to be asked to moderate more and to just do three is not fair on the students actually."

When asked whether Policy detracts or diverts attention from other teaching and educational quality initiatives, L3 replied, "no I do not think so. You need people focused on that, so I don't think there is any detraction, or anything negative about it - there is a process." … The lecturer continued, "I think people are sometimes challenged to meet deadlines, if their workload is not evenly distributed and which is quite a common issue."

While expressing a preference for policy with less text, L4 noted, "we have so many other readings to do, we can't just manage this much text." L3 agreed simplification was necessary, stating, "this form might be fine, but that is the risk. They end up putting ridiculous amounts of tick boxes, to make sure they are covering every possible eventuality across all programs, which drives people nuts."

A lecturer (L4) referred to the workload issues associated with policy requirements, stating, "I think it helps, but if it continues on this route that we very heavily moderate everything every year, that will not be helpful, because people find it too much and they will not do it properly." The lecturer elaborated that "with this new policy, I welcome the fact that the courses would be moderated only in 3 year cycles - I think that would be good. Or if a new lecturer comes in or other major changes". The lecturer cautioned that otherwise "it just becomes a very laborious thing that doesn't necessarily bring that much value."

Moderation Policy Doesn't Recognise or Respond to Current Diversity of Practice

One lecturer (L5) argued that aspects of process were impractical noting, "we do not write the exam, we do not even write the assignment until I've met with the cohort. So this idea of us supposedly being able to prepare the assignment 1 week before the course starts ... is totally impractical." The lecturer noted that setting of an assignment for a class "can't happen until you actually meet them" and "I get them to tell me in writing, what's your experience …that is essential for the type of assignment." The lecturer further explained, "so I get to know the cohort; then I have to go away and completely rewrite what I had in mind for the assignment sometimes."

While commenting on practice challenges, L2 noted, "I do not think the institutional policy recognises the diversity of the assessments that we do… Presentations is probably the big one, because anything that's written or whatever is easy enough to review." The lecturer elaborated that "I also don't think that the moderation process reflects team teaching situations very well." The lecturer noted, on some courses there are multiple lecturers, who "kind of cross moderate within our own course, but there's no way to capture that." The lecturer further states that the "weakest part, [is] that

[policy] doesn't recognise the kind of teaching that we do and the assessments, that we do."

Any attempt by the institution to take a one size fits all approach was seen as "quite naive" by one lecturer (L5). Lecturer L1 suggested an alternative approach to the policy, to allow greater flexibility for involvement by Schools, where provision is made in the policy for a formal process that facilitates "each school having an approved procedure for summative assessment".

4.3.5 POLICY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

While raising the issue that frequent changes to policy can lead to uncertainty and confusion, which leads to resistance among practitioners, L1 explained, "I don't think the institutional policy is particularly helpful, primarily because of the number of changes over the last 10 years ... so that nobody seems to know, or really understands how it's going to happen."   This lecturer also observed that the manner in which changes were made was unhelpful; "it's often the decisions being made elsewhere without consultation... and that then can cause quite a lot of resistance."

Meanwhile L3 expressed frustration over institution policy changes that are perceived as unnecessary at the school level, where the current school "forms worked fine before." The lecturer elaborated, "we have got forms which have been trialled and developed over many years, and then somebody else comes up with a whole new set of forms, and we don't understand why as our forms work fine."

In addition, L3 challenged perceived shortcomings in the policy development process, which are identified as lacking consultation with practitioners and consequently the policy lacks practitioner 'ownership'.   L3 noted that a major challenge is "that people buy-in to the process".   The lecturer further explained that some induction events related to new policy would be an improvement, noting that policy is often introduced with minimal communication "and expect that we will read it when we are really busy people. I think it's an unrealistic expectation." L3 further noted, "we could miss something which might be really quite important - that is the risk."

Policy Lacks Communication

Citing a lack of communication with practitioners over the introduction of new policy as being an issue, L3 noted that "no one actually runs courses at all or communicates in any particular way..., so the institution has to make time for people to get some ownership and engage with them. In facilitating more "engagement with policy", L3 argued, "training could be the mechanism for engaging, but also making sure that the Heads of Schools are engaging with staff, through staff training ... it is an approach to get buy-in and engaging with the people."

A lack of communication was also raised by L4 who identified that the introduction of a new moderation policy coincided with a lot of other changes and that a reason for a lack of awareness "might have been there were so many other changes, that no one can actually keep up."

4.3.6   THEME 2 KEY FINDINGS

Interview responses provide insights into lecturer perceptions of the effectiveness of policy to improve moderation outcomes. Key findings are summarised as follows:

Key Finding 3: Practitioner Ability and Capacity Rated as More Important to Moderation Outcomes than Policy

Interview data found that the role and relative importance of the practitioner was more crucial to successful outcomes of the moderation process than the contribution of policy. The reliance on the skill, experience, workload capacity and credibility of the individual moderator was identified as crucial by lecturers, particularly in challenging situations when a moderator is partnered with novice lecturers or is addressing more complex matters, such as the consistency of assessment by multiple markers. In contrast policy was identified as having a secondary role, such as providing a 'backstop' source of information for lecturers when further structure was needed to manage a challenge in the moderation process. Furthermore, it was found that successful implementation of moderation policy was dependant on thorough and

genuine implementation by practitioners to meet the spirit of the policy rather than approaching moderation as a straightforward compliance process.

Key Finding 4: Policy Preference Linked to Policy Development Process

The interview findings indicated a clear preference among lecturers for the established School policy over the recently introduced institution policy. A wide range of reasons were given for this preference, including a lack of communication and training related to the new policy and a lack of confidence in the new policy due to its perceived shortcomings. Other reasons were linked to the development process for the new policy, which was seen as being imposed without adequate consultation with practitioners or enough regard to the diversity of established school moderation practice. This contrasted with the strong sense of ownership that had been engendered in the School policy which interview data indicates had been carefully refined for a number of years and was viewed as more effective and user-friendly.

Key Finding 5: Policy Issues Can Detract from Practice

The lecturers identified a wide range of shortcomings with the provisions of the institution policy including some confusing terminology, overly prescriptive procedure and a lack of clarity over key matters, such as the term between moderation events. A key shortcoming was seen to be a lack of compatibility with the diversity of teaching and assessment practices within the School. The prospect of moderation policy dictating teaching practice was seen as being at odds with the primary expectation of policy as a simplified document to support practitioners.

4.4   THEME 3 – PRACTICE CHALLENGES

This theme is discussed under the following sub headings: Process Issues; Resource and Time Issues; Skills Availability and Training Issues and Practitioner Issues.

4.4.1 PROCESS ISSUES

Policy Process and Procedure Unclear/Frustrating

Five of the lecturers raised the issue of unclear or frustrating procedure being a challenge to effective moderation. L4 noted that "we don't have clarity where we can find all the forms, and ... this policy is just a lot of text, but it does not give you kind of practical instructions, how to actually do it all." In observing that procedure which is not user friendly could lead to practitioner discontent, L6 noted, "for the form, you are filling out the course name and the course number, semester, so many times and it is a waste of time, and people are really resistant to that." It was suggested by the same lecturer (L6) that unnecessary time and effort spent on completing procedure can distract from the focus of practitioners on teaching, and a more user-friendly design of procedure could enable a lecturer "to cut out these unnecessary matters, and leave time for the really important and thorough stuff" (L6).

Two of the lecturers identified aspects of an old-fashioned procedure as a challenge to the efficient completion of moderation tasks, and questioned whether paperless approaches and more digital collaboration could streamline the system. A lecturer (L4) identified the potential for digital collaboration to enhance the moderation process and allow moderation related messaging, digital signing and access by stakeholders, "so having everything there in one place". The same lecturer acknowledged that "I know that it is not cheap to develop something like that, but we are in the digital age now."

Complexity due to multiple-markers challenges integrity of assessment

Three of the lecturers identified the additional challenge of moderating courses that involve multiple markers. A lecturer (L5) identified the challenge to moderation that arise from courses with multiple markers and "I think it's really important that if you are getting more than one marker across a paper, that you've got to ask for samples from each one … if we have got a generous and a harsh marker, then the moderator will sort it out." L5 further added, "as moderator we need to see the spreadsheet of all the students … I want to see what the spread is here."

4.4.2 RESOURCES AND TIME ISSUES

Five of the lecturers expressed concern about the lack of institution awareness of the time commitment needed for effective practice. L2 noted that moderation requires a notable time commitment from lecturers and moderators:

you could be spending 5 hours or more for a specific course and that doesn't work, if you're not resourced for it. And I think that's the main resistance for people who don't follow the processes, that they say I don't have time, and whether it's true or not, it is an argument that can be made, if it's not resourced enough.

Meanwhile L4 also recognised the time commitment that was associated with being allocated a moderation assignment; "From the moderator's point of view, the post moderation is very time consuming, and I don't find it fair that it is not in the workload." Workload issues were seen as particularly onerous for moderators with a heavier course allocation; "also in terms of some people who moderate one course, while some people moderate 5 or 6 courses. So it is also unbalanced, then, when it comes to the workload. The lecturer also noted that moderation tasks were often urgent, "it is quite time consuming, especially when ... many times you need to do it, you don't have the flexibility to do it within two weeks, but you need to do it within 2 days."

Expressing similar concerns, L6 observed that the "role of moderation, just gets, mushed up in the teaching load. There's no clear acknowledgement, that it is a tangible activity, and an important activity. It is just one of the ... many millions of teaching things you do." L6 further suggested that "if we're going to continue to improve and be really genuine about it, [it] actually warrants recognition as a component of the workload." Another lecturer (L2) agreed, noting that mixed messages were being sent, and "I think it needs to be resourced better, and I think if it is given importance in that it's supported at a workload level, people will take it more seriously".

Timeframes and time compression

All six of the lecturers identified tight timeframes and unreasonable or unnecessarily early time limits as being a challenge to effective moderation practice. L1 observed,

"because of the way we deliver, the time compression means it's very difficult to get your assessments written and moderated", and moderation is often the last urgent step before delivering a class.

While reporting that time limits set in policy were not always deliverable for all courses, for practical reasons L4 explained that as a course coordinator it was difficult to get the assignments ready early for pre-moderation as; "sometimes you need to know more about the course cohort, and the students that you have in your course, and a couple of weeks before the course started, you do not even have all the names in the list" The lecturer also noted that in certain circumstances there were compressed timeframes associated with post-moderation and pre-moderation for courses delivered in successive semesters that resulted in policy and practice conflicts when trying to achieve early time limits; "I was expecting, before I set it up, that ... I could ask feedback from the students how the block one and the related things went, so that I could use that to inform then how would I set up exactly the next assignment."

Whereas L5 argued; "being given the work to moderate in a timely fashion is one of the challenges." The lecturer noted, "what can go wrong is it's given to the moderator too late, without giving the moderator sufficient time to do the pre-moderation and post-moderation."

Two of the lecturers raised the temptation to 'tick boxes' while under time pressure as a challenge to good moderation practice. L1 noted that assessment moderation generally works very well, "with the exception of sometimes there is an incentive for a moderator under pressure to tick the boxes and sign it without looking at it."

Meanwhile L6 noted that the compressed timeframes can sometimes impact on the quality of moderation, both in terms of a rushed, substandard submission from lecturers and pressure on the moderator to complete the task; "and if you're not delivered all that information, when it takes longer to moderate it." L6 elaborated on the consequential challenges to lecturers, identifying difficulties to follow an educational process, noting; "what we are seeing right now is a pressure to moderate our assessments earlier and earlier and earlier." The lecturer continued; "it doesn't allow you to follow the principles of living curriculum, if you need to change things throughout

the course, ... so if there's an imbalance there, when we need all that documentation available at the beginning."

4.4.3 SKILLS AVAILABILITY AND TRAINING ISSUES

Staff Induction and Training

All six of the lecturers identified the numerous challenges presented by moderating courses coordinated by lecturers who are new to the institution and unfamiliar with the moderation process or procedures in the School. Three lecturers identified the need for effective staff induction and training. L3 noted that training was most valuable to "explain to them, why it is important. They do not know, so you explain it to them, and how the process operates."

L5 agreed and emphasised; "I think the challenge is to bring new and even relatively new staff on board, in terms of how to do it." The lecturer noted that staff had arranged some training and that; "on QA, but not everybody turns up to it and not everybody's following it, for some reason. So I don't know that we're in as strong a position right now, as we have been. But we need to be."

L6 identified, "the first challenge is becoming really familiar with the process and new staff having time to get their heads around what this means, and what information they have to provide." As well as identifying the need for forms and procedures being user-friendly for new staff, training and induction course were identified by the lecturer as a matter requiring attention, noting, "we need to be much more thorough on this - much more thorough."

Limited Availability of Skilled Moderators

L1 suggested that a major limitation to the effectiveness of moderation was the limited availability of skilled moderators. Therefore, the system of allocating moderators to courses "can be problematic - trying to find the sufficient number of people who are well enough informed in different areas that can do moderation, so that can be a little bit of a problem." As a result of the problem, L1 observed, "what you end up with is a

few people doing a lot of moderation and then it becomes a real time constraint and I don't see any answer for that." In L1's view, those experienced moderators tend to endure the excess demands on their time and "buy into the prospect of it, or at least they buy into the need for it, and just make the time."

While arguing that the skill demanded to achieve high quality moderation is often underestimated, L3 identified weaknesses which emerge when "we just assign people to be a moderator, so it is the blind leading the blind." The lecturer promoted the need for provision of "higher level training for moderators".

Matching Moderator Skills to Requirements of Course/Lecturer

When reflecting on the need for a moderator to be a subject-expert, a lecturer (L2) acknowledged that you can moderate without being an expert, but noted that technical subject matter can be reviewed in more depth by a subject expert. When reflecting on moderating courses with less subject matter expertise, the same lecturer stated that the "kinds of discussions about how to assess, I can have ... at a pedagogy level rather than a subject matter level". An alternative view was expressed by another lecturer (L6), who reflected on experience as a moderator outside of an area of expertise, and recalled that "the reflection from the lecturer was that I sometimes asked the most searching questions, because I didn't know about the content." The lecturer did caution that "that is one of the challenges – the time."

A lecturer (L4) argued that there can be benefits from matching inexperienced lecturers and moderators with experienced counterparts in the process. Meanwhile another lecturer (L2) reflected that the distinction between the recent or well established status of the course should also be identified as a relevant factor that should be considered in the allocation of a moderator, as collaborative aspects of moderation and subject knowledge are "most important with new courses, because you're still finding your way with the assessments and levels."

4.4.4 PRACTITIONER ISSUES

Inconsistent practice among practitioners

The issue of some individual lecturer's being less organised, capable, or willing practitioners was identified as a challenge by several lecturers. L1 noted, "some colleagues are very good at getting the assessments done well ahead of time and some prefer not to, for good reasons." Although noting that moderation was successfully completed as a whole, L2 noted, "there are individuals who do not and I do not think there have been very much management around that." L2 further observed, "it depends on the individual, because some people are actively resistant to the quality management process ... That detract from the process, for sure."

While identifying the related tendency for moderation to be focussed on identifying problems rather than excellence, L1 observed "the course moderation is mostly concentrated on staff who were not performing well according to the students … rather than praising staff who have been really good."

Tension/Conflict between Lecturer and Moderators

Four lecturers identified the challenge that can result from tensions, when lecturers and moderators were unable to agree over moderation outcomes. L1 noted that some individuals "are very willing to make changes the moderator asks, while some are more resistant, as I discovered."   L6 elaborated on the issue of tension, noting the depth of feeling that can be involved as "some people who are course coordinators feel that if there's any disagreement between them and the moderators, a personal slight on their teaching ability, or at the end, they have to agree." The same lecturer (L6) commented from the point of view of a supervisor, and argued that "if there is disagreement, then record, this disagreement ... rather than just signing them and pretending things are OK." In the lecturer's opinion, when disagreement occurs, the lecturer is "the expert" and should prevail, but also needs to take "responsibility" for the situation, by reflecting on the outcomes, from refusing to do what the moderator recommended, such as the resulting student feedback.

4.4.5 THEME 3 KEY FINDINGS

The interview responses provided lecturer perceptions of the challenges to successful moderation practice. The Key Findings on practice challenges can be summarised as follows:

Key Finding 6: Resourcing and Timing Issues are Key to Good Practice

The outcomes of interviews indicated that resourcing and timing issues are one of the key challenges to effective moderation in the School. Timeframes that were compressed to follow the academic calendar and time limits that were perceived as inflexible and unnecessarily early were identified as being a challenge to effective moderation practice. Resourcing issues such as the limited availability of skilled and experienced moderators and uneven workloads were also identified as exacerbating the problem. The findings indicate that more institution recognition of workload demands associated with moderation would be a positive step towards making improvements.

Key Finding 7: Matching of Moderator and Lecturer to Enhance Practice

The findings of this research confirm the importance of the skills, experience and workload capacity of the moderator to achieving good moderation outcomes. At a school level the findings also indicate the importance of a diverse range of moderation skills to successfully manage a range of different practice challenges. These findings also suggest the potential importance of educational leaders paying attention to the careful matching of a moderator to a lecturer, to reflect pedagogical, professional and development priorities of the lecturer, in addition to course development priorities.

Key Finding 8: Skills Availability and Training to Manage Practice Challenges

The findings of this research indicate that institutions should recognise the inherent challenges and complexity of good moderation practice and investigate professional development requirements of staff at all levels. The interview data indicates that

induction training for lecturers could help to address inconsistent moderation practice and address a lack of policy familiarity. An adequate supply of trained and skilled moderators from a range of professional backgrounds is also identified as crucial. Meanwhile, educational leaders should have the awareness and the necessary skills to manage moderation related issues, such as workload allocation and resolving professional tensions and conflict that can arise during moderation.

Key Finding 9: Policy Development Challenges

Finally, the interview findings as a whole reveal that moderation has complexities and tensions which are likely to present a challenge to the policy development skills of educational leaders who are tasked with writing effective policy and procedures. The interview data highlights potential pitfalls to the development moderation policy. These include the need for policy to be sufficiently sophisticated to support a wide diversity of practice, yet avoid the practitioner frustration that can arise from overly complex or inefficient procedure.

4.5   SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This chapter presented findings from the analysis of data collected from a total of six semi-structured interviews with lecturers from the case study of a School within an ITP institution. The interview data was thematically coded and reported under three principle themes: The Purposes and Principles of Moderation, The Effectiveness of Policy and Practice Challenges with nine key findings being identified.

In relation to the purposes and principles of moderation, there was found to be a universal acceptance among lecturers for moderation being an important activity at the School and a notable objection to the notion of moderation being a compliance activity. The lecturers view of the key roles and functions of moderation at the school were explored and found to include a focus on consistency, equity and fairness to students as well as moderation as a process which enables conversation and dialogue between practitioners, to improve teaching and learning.

The theme relating to the effectiveness of policy found a range of views from the lecturers on their expectations for policy in successful moderation, from those that found policy of low overall importance to those who found it useful for a specific purpose, such as being a general guide to procedure. Lecturer familiarity with the recently introduced policy was found to be moderate on the whole and most lecturers expressed a preference for the School's own procedures. Furthermore, the lecturers identified a number of issues of concern with the policy which has the potential to detract from its clarity and effectiveness, such as aspects of procedure which were deemed unhelpful, prescriptive or onerous.

The theme addressing practice challenges found that practitioners rated the skills, experience, knowledge and capacity of moderators to be the key factor in determining the effectiveness of moderation. It was found that lecturers had concerns relating to unclear or frustrating process in addition to resource and timeframe related issues, such as pressure to complete moderation tasks during busy phases of the academic calendar. Other key practice challenges identified by lecturers were related to skills availability and training, such as staff induction and the limited availability of skilled moderators. Further practitioner related issues, such as inconsistent practices and tension between the lecturer and the moderator, were also raised.

The following chapter (Chapter 5) will present a discussion of the key findings under three themes with support from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, leading to the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes key findings from the data presented in Chapter Four and discusses them in light of the academic literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The intention of this discussion section is to explore the key trends of the findings with a particular view to determining the nature of links between moderation values, policy and practice challenges. This chapter is structured around three themes, which are derived from the research questions: purposes and principles of moderation, effectiveness of policy and practice challenges.

5.2   THEME 1 – PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION

The first theme discussed is that of exploring common ground and discourse in the prevailing purposes and principles that guide moderation practice with support from literature.   This theme relates most closely to the Literature Review Theme 2 – Purposes and Principles of Moderation.

5.2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERATION

One of the strongest aspects of the interview data was the universal acceptance by participants that moderation is a necessary and highly important quality assurance process for the School.   This strongly dispelled any notion that there was any underlying scepticism among lecturers with regard to the value of moderation. Acceptance of moderation by participants reflects the reality of the contemporary role of moderation in the New Zealand ITP sector, which is essentially a mandatory requirement of government policy, delegated to institutions.   This has established moderation as a "quality assurance process that plays a central role in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle in higher education institutions" (Beutel, Adie & Lloyd, 2014, p. 20).

Reasons for this support for moderation among lecturers was mentioned by participants. Interview outcomes indicate that the School was an early adopter of moderation for its programmes and there were strong indicators that the School policy was developed over a long period of time with the active involvement of staff. Certainly it seems likely that any serious debate was had long ago and moderation is now thoroughly embedded in the calendar of the School.

5.2.2 KEY ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MODERATION - CONSISTENCY AND FAIRNESS

A range of responses were expressed regarding the key roles of moderation, which were then compared with the outcomes of the research of Adie et al. (2013), to allow further insight and reflection against practice elsewhere in the tertiary education sector. In terms of the discourses identified in that study, the predominant views expressed by participants in this research can generally be characterised as "moderation as equity" and "moderation as community building", although some elements of other discourses (moderation as justification and moderation as accountability) were also identified (Adie et al., 2013, p. 974).

Moderation as equity is deemed by Adie et al. (2013) to be synonymous with notions of consistency and fairness to students, including the consistency of judgment in awarding grades and the accuracy and consistency of information being provided to students. The approach to moderation in the School was also found to be consistent with the values of ensuring assessment is valid, fair, reliable and consistent. This is seen in the School as a focus by lecturers on the learning experience of students and signifies lecturer acceptance of the contemporary trend, which Boyd and Bloxham (2007) referred to as the "primacy of assessment" in tertiary education (p. 3).

5.2.3 KEY ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MODERATION – COMMUNITY BUILDING

Another principle of moderation identified by several participants is consistent with elements of the approach identified as "moderation as community building" (Adie et al., 2013, p. 974). Good practice was seen as dependant on a good partnership between the moderator and lecturer. The conversation aspects of the moderation process were

also identified as an alternative approach to collaboration in other aspects of the operation of the School, such as collaborative development of course material.

These comments from lecturers in my study are consistent with the views of collaborative approaches reported by Adie et al. (2013) as "typified by conversations of collaborative establishment and review of assessment tasks, criteria, standards, learning experiences, and teaching strategies", that can be important to unlocking more meaningful outcomes from the moderation process (p. 974). According to Bloxham (2009), developing shared knowledge of standards is understood as being "created through a social process involving dialogue and experience" (p. 218).

Adie et al. (2013) suggest the potential to formalise this into a more structured, purposeful and ambitious approach to moderation as community building, where effort is made to involve the entire teaching team in discussions from course design, assessment and reflection (p. 974). Notably, a number of challenges with this approach were also identified by the same authors, which included the limited opportunities for discussion due to time constraints. The challenge to practice of time constraints was also identified by this research, although this was highlighted to be a challenge to all moderation approaches.

5.2.4 PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION SUMMARY

This research study indicates that all of the lecturers interviewed share fundamental common ground, in that they accept the necessity for moderation as a quality assurance measure and reject the notion of moderation as a compliance focussed process. The findings of this research also clearly align with the conclusions of Adie et al. (2013), that moderation was viewed by some practitioners as a measure to ensure equity and consistency and by others as a way to support learning.

Interestingly, there was no evidence from this research that the views of moderation led to differences of moderation practice that was 'polarised' along those lines or resulted in frustration or conflict between practitioners. This perhaps suggests that a School can develop and sustain a 'moderation culture' which is sufficiently nuanced to incorporate a range of values into a harmonious approach.

Adie et al. (2013) conclude that contemporary moderation practice is "an idiosyncratic mix of beliefs and experience" and caution leadership against taking simplistic approaches (p. 975). Instead, it is suggested that a balanced approach is needed to optimise results. These literature findings appear pertinent in light of the findings of this research, which indicate that a distinct 'moderation culture' has developed in the School and suggests that policy approaches needs careful consideration to avoid detracting from current practices.

5.3 THEME 2 – EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY

The main intention of this research with regards to educational policy, was to examine issues associated with the effectiveness of policy as a tool for educational leaders to delegate moderation tasks. In this case study, the research was undertaken at an interesting point in time, when the School was in the midst of experiencing a transitional policy phase, whilst bringing a new institution-wide policy into effect. The new policy was to replace some well established School procedures, and the impact of this transition in policy was reflected in the interview data.

5.3.1 ROLE/EXPECTATIONS OF POLICY AND THE PRACTITIONER IN MODERATION

There were a range of views from the lecturers on their expectations of policy for successful moderation, although no responses could be seen as identifying policy as being the key component of successful moderation at a School level.

Although greater knowledge of policy was seen as necessary for moderators, some participants questioned the need for lecturers to have a detailed knowledge and understanding of policy. The role of the lecturer was seen as being more process driven and it was therefore seen as more important for lecturers to have a working knowledge of procedure. For lecturers, policy was identified as being necessary so that it is available for occasional reference, which was alternatively referred to by participants as a 'scaffold' or 'backstop' to practitioner knowledge and experience, such as to help reconcile a disagreement between a moderator and lecturers. Reliance on

policy was identified as being dependant on staff experience, and was identified as most important for helping newer lecturers as they were being inducted into moderation.

In this scenario, it was identified as desirable for policy to be communicated to the lecturer level by procedures and for those procedures to have sufficient coherence to be closely aligned with the associated policy. This approach was acknowledged as placing a responsibility on policy writers to produce user-friendly forms of policy. Alternatively, it would be necessary for middle-leadership to mediate, translate and connect institution policy into a simplified, clear procedure suitable for guiding practice. It was identified that policy suitable for this purpose needs to be simplified, with participants identifying some forms of procedure that were most suitable to guide practice, such as a checklists or process diagrams. These findings, that a simplified and user friendly form of procedure is preferable to lecturers, is consistent with the study by Scott et al (2013), who reported that quality improvement of the moderation process could be achieved by implementing a user friendly procedure based on current best practice.

While interview findings generally indicate a degree of scepticism on the part of lecturers over the degree to which policy can contribute to effective moderation, this contrasted with the strong correlation of their opinions over the high importance of the skill, experience, ability and capacity of the practitioner as a crucial component of successful moderation. The reliance on the ability of the individual moderator was also identified as particularly crucial when a moderator is partnered with a novice lecturer or is addressing more complex matters, such as the consistency of assessment by multiple markers.

5.3.2 POLICY FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The lecturer familiarity with the recently introduced institution policy was found to be moderate on the whole and most lecturers expressed a preference for the School's own procedures. Lecturers expressed frustration, uncertainty and confusion over institution policy changes that were perceived as unnecessary at the school level and poorly communicated. In contrast the established policies were supported by lecturers

as they were perceived as working well and were seen as being widely understood and suitable for the School's courses.

One of the guiding objectives for this research was to examine the issues associated with the translation of educational policy into practice, and the degree to which policy contributes to effective assessment moderation. The interview data highlights a lack of policy consultation and communication with affected practitioners, which is suggested by the lecturers as diminishing the awareness and sense of "ownership" among the staff tasked with its implementation. In this respect, there is also a contrast with the higher regard in which school policy is held.

A review of the institution policy reveals that it has no statement of consultation and the policy and procedure are both silent on the rationale or process which guided the preparation and adoption of the policy. In order to improve the lecturer awareness and ownership, the policy development process prior to adoption should allow either for a robust process of consultation with the practitioners tasked with its implementation or allow for a transitional phase, prior to full adoption, such as a trial period. The findings confirmed that either of these approaches could have enabled a process of feedback and reflection to inform the development of a more robust final policy, which better reflect the diversity of assessment across the campus, but still provides the necessary oversight for the institution.

5.3.3 POLICY CLARITY ISSUES

Lecturers identified a number of issues of concern with the institution policy which has potential to detract from its clarity and effectiveness, such as aspects of procedure which were deemed unhelpful, prescriptive or onerous.

Interview data suggests that a policy weakness is a lack of explanation of the policy values regarding moderation. It is pertinent to reflect on the importance of clarity surrounding the key values and principles which underpin educational policy (Bell and Stevenson, 2011). While it is acknowledged that there are no mandatory requirements for a statement of values in the policy of a tertiary institution, there is support in the literature reviewed that this approach will improve the transparency of educational

policy and its perceived legitimacy and acceptance by practitioners (Ryan, 1994). In the section titled "purpose", the institution policy refers to ensuring that "assessment activities are: fair, reliable, valid, consistently-applied, and support learning and teaching" while ensuring "grades are awarded on the basis of the valid assessment of outcomes". While the stated purpose is brief and functional, these values are considered to be consistent with some key prevailing contemporary values to assessment moderation and quality assurance. It is notable however, that the stated purpose does not fully reflect the range of moderation values expressed by lecturers in the School, specifically collaborative and community building approaches.

A review of the institution moderation policy documents also reveals that, by design, it has low levels of internal coherence. Although there is a clear and functional statement of values, Ryan (1994) suggests that policy should also include a statement of need and a statement of expected outcomes. Neither the institution policy or procedure have such statements, and both policies lack a logical connection between policy values and policy requirements. The institutional policy is also fundamentally dependent upon the content of 'reference documents' listed therein, including a series of templates and checklists, which effectively set out most of the detailed practice requirements. The institution policy also cross-references 'definitions' to a separate document. This lack of internal policy coherence is at odds with the Government guidelines of the Legislative Advisory Committee (2014), although it is acknowledged that these guidelines are considered to reflect best practice and are not a mandatory requirement for institution policy.

In addition, a crucial provision in the institution policy and procedure refers to a list of "templates supporting these procedures" and specifies that "use of these templates is mandatory". This policy provision effectively means that the provisions of templates are given the same status as provisions of the primary policy. This is considered problematic, as a template is usually intended as an explanatory procedural tool, such as a checklist on a standard form, and is not structured to successfully set out core policy requirements. For example, not all items on the template checklist will satisfy an objective test of policy cohesion, such as that set out by Ryan (1994), whereby each policy and its intended outcomes should be transparently explained and justified. The mandatory compliance with templates would both detract from the effective flexibility

of the policy and impose a potential compliance burden on both practitioners and the institution.   It is pertinent to reflect on lecturer comments which indicate that it is desirable for forms and checklists to be comprehensive as a prompt to practice. However, under the institution policy, this approach would be rendered problematic, due to the commensurate increase in the prescriptive mandatory practice.

All of the lecturers raised issues with respect to the lack of clarity of various provisions of the institute policy. In particular, some lecturers expressed surprise over the lack of certainty with respect to the timing of moderation, which is noted as being "at least every three years". It was argued by lecturers that this term was very open, and that a lot can go wrong between three yearly moderation events, such as course changes. Although the institution policy makes provision for individual schools to prepare and adopt a "Moderation Plan", comments from lecturers questioned the lack of clarity of policy terminology and the lack of certainty over the frequency of different types of moderation events.

5.4   THEME 3 – PRACTICE CHALLENGES

As stated previously, the practice findings were not intended to examine School practice in detail, but rather to explore key practice challenges, and then align these findings with policy analysis outcomes. The intention of the exercise is to determine whether policy contributes to addressing the practice challenges, or conversely, if policy tensions exist which exacerbate the problems.

5.4.1 RESOURCING ISSUES

All of the participants expressed concern about the lack of institution awareness of the significant time commitment that was needed for effective moderation. Lecturers noted that moderation requires a time commitment from both lecturers and moderators, which varied depending on the moderation assignment. Workload issues were seen as unevenly distributed due to the limited availability of experienced moderators and were therefore particularly onerous for the more skilled and experienced moderators, who often had a heavier course allocation, and who also needed to attend to their own

lecturing responsibilities. The perceived lack of recognition of workload issues associated with the moderation tasks were seen as synonymous with the moderation process being undervalued by the institution and a cause of discontent.

5.4.2 POLICY TENSIONS

When examining links between policy and practice, this research identified several underlying policy tensions, which could be exacerbated by the implementation of the moderation policy. If left unresolved, it is considered that these policy tensions have the potential to detract from the effectiveness of policy implementation.

A policy tension was identified by analysing the concerns of several lecturers, that provisions of the policy could sustain the recent trend of moderation workloads becoming 'heavier'. Other lecturers identified that the workloads associated with moderation were wrapped up in the general teaching workload, and hence not expressly budgeted in the workload allocations or work schedules of moderators. The failure to provide sufficient resources to enable the proper implementation of policy would present individual moderators with the dilemma of completing additional work at the expense of other responsibilities or reducing the quality of moderation by adopting a "tick-box" approach. Alternatively, middle level leaders may be presented with the dilemma, of allocating higher workloads to experienced moderators or choosing to compromise quality by spreading the moderation workload more widely, among less skilled and less experienced members of staff.

A further policy tension was identified with regards to the policy template provisions which require 'front-loading' of summative pre-moderation to the beginning of the course. This provision does have some support in the literature reviewed, with Bloxham et al. (2016) arguing that "flipping the process so that most moderation effort is applied at the beginning of courses" can be beneficial, such as prioritising moderation at a time in the academic calendar when there are fewer competing responsibilities (p.650). However, a policy dilemma was identified, as the rigid application of this approach was seen as conflicting with an educational process. Comments from lecturers indicate valid educational reasons for a more flexible approach to moderation in the case study School, so as not to conflict with the well-

founded teaching approach of experienced lecturers. Certainly this presents a cautionary argument for a more flexible approach to policy that is intended to apply throughout an institution, to ensure that requirements can be adjusted to reflect the diversity of assessment. Ultimately, it is argued that policy should be carefully written to achieve an appropriate balance and to ensure that administrative compliance is not in tension with the core values of improving teaching and learning.

5.4.3 PRACTITIONER ISSUES

A number of other key findings related to practice issues that were associated with individual or groups of practitioners at the School, which are discussed as follows.

Need for a Moderator to be a subject expert

There was a degree of discourse among participants on the importance of a moderator being a subject expert in the course that was being moderated. It was identified that the form of moderation might be somewhat different when undertaken either by subject experts or by non-subject experts. It was argued that technical subject matter can be reviewed in more depth by a subject expert but non-subject experts were equally able to comment at a pedagogy level. The key challenge identified was that of sufficient time to conduct in-depth moderation.

Matching Moderator Skills to Requirements of Course/Lecturer

The outcomes of this research indicate the potential importance of educational leaders paying attention to the careful matching of a moderator to a lecturer, to reflect pedagogical, professional and development priorities of the lecturer, in addition to course development priorities. For example, the findings identified that there can be benefits from matching inexperienced lecturers and moderators with experienced counterparts. The findings also highlighted that a moderator with subject knowledge can be particularly important when a lecturer is managing the issues associated with establishing a new course.

Addressing Tension between Lecturer and Moderators

This research identified the challenge that can result from tensions, when lecturers and moderators were unable to agree over moderation outcomes. This highlights the need for educational leaders to anticipate and manage the potential for tension and conflict during moderation and suggests that it is desirable to establish a clear process to follow in the event of an entrenched disagreement which cannot be resolved through negotiation.

Frustrating Procedure

The interview data highlighted the frustration that can arise from procedure that is unnecessary or inefficient for the practitioner, such as forms that require repetitive entry of data, which can distract the focus of practitioners from teaching and learning matters. Old-fashioned approaches to procedure were also identified as a challenge to the efficient completion of moderation tasks, and it was proposed that paperless approaches and more digital collaboration could streamline the system and enhance the efficiency of the moderation process.

5.5   CONCLUSIONS

The research found evidence of a complex and distinctive moderation culture among practitioners in the School, that is supported by a blend of values that underpin the approach. There is strong support among the lecturers for moderation as an academic quality assurance process and also clear aspirations that moderation can be a beneficial process when used to improve the student learning experience, through ensuring consistency and equity of assessment, and also as a basis for collaboration and conversations that supports and drives more ambitious teaching and learning improvements. It was also found that lecturers rated the skills, experience, knowledge and capacity of moderators to be the key factor in determining the effectiveness of moderation, with policy playing a less important, supporting role, which was likened by lecturers to a 'backstop' or 'scaffold'.

This study found a number of detractors from the effective translation of policy into practice. Firstly, there were shortcomings in the policy development process related to consultation, communication and training, which were perceived by lecturers as detracting from the sense of 'ownership' of institution policy and which contrasted with the positive regard in which the outgoing School policy was held. Secondly, in addition to a number of shortcomings of policy clarity and cohesion, there are examples of underlying policy tensions, related to workload recognition and management, that are exacerbated by the current implementation of the moderation policy.

This research highlights the complexities which may be encountered in the policy development process, to recognise the diversity of moderation culture which exists within an institute while resolving the inherent tensions involved in achieving a balance between quality assurance, compliance, and teaching and learning improvements. The challenges for education leaders in the development of effective moderation policy should therefore not be underestimated, in order for opportunities for moderation to drive teaching improvements be fully realised.

5.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TERTIARY SENIOR LEADERS, LECTURERS AND MODERATORS.

Recommendation One

- A review and reconciliation of the resource allocation issues associated with internal moderation.

    This research has identified moderation policy tensions in the institute, which have arisen due to a perceived lack of recognition and planning of moderation workloads, including the capacity of moderators to meet compressed time schedules while maintaining quality outcomes. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the careful matching of moderators and lecturers, based on qualitative factors, can improve moderation outcomes. It is therefore recommended that resource allocation issues be reviewed and reconciled.

Recommendation Two

- A regular review of the effectiveness of the institute moderation policy and procedure and amendments to improve shortcomings.

  Outcomes of this research have identified issues with institute policy, including evidence of shortcomings in the clarity and cohesion of policy and questions surrounding the approach to policy structure and flexibility. Policy review on a regular basis, with any necessary amendments, is recommended to improve and maintain its effectiveness.

Recommendation Three

- Improvements to consultation and communication provisions for future moderation policy development and implementation.

  Findings of this research have indicated concerns at the perceived lack of consultation, engagement and communication with schools during the development, review and roll-out of policy. It is recommended that these matters be given consideration during the development of future moderation policy.

Recommendation Four

- A review of moderation related training to staff to address potential skills gaps, including high level training for academic leaders and new moderators and induction training to new lecturers.

  This research has highlighted the need for further moderation related training, including an improved system of induction training for newer lecturers and the availability of higher level training for moderators and leaders, including those leaders who are responsible for writing moderation policy.

5.7   LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is noted that this research is a small scale case study that is commensurate with the length and time requirements of the Master of Educational Leadership and Management (MEdLM) dissertation with 60 credits. In addition, the research relates to internal assessment moderation practice within a single School at a tertiary institution and discusses issues associated with a policy transition that was taking place at the time of the study. The majority of the data is therefore expected to be Institution and School specific in nature, and the outcomes and recommendations are not intended to be applied beyond the institution subject to the research activity.

However, the researcher wishes to acknowledge that, within the context of tertiary education sector in NZ, there is considerable potential to investigate contemporary moderation practices across a broader range of institutions. A national survey is therefore recommended to engage broader perspectives from senior leaders in tertiary education across the country, in order to produce more definitive research outcomes.

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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Research title: Internal Moderation of Assessment in an ITP sector Institution: Translating Policy into Practice.

Date:

Interviewee:

Researcher: Jean Simpson

Introduction Question

Can I ask you about your level of experience first – just generally how many years you have been doing moderation?; if your experience is as a moderator, course coordinator, lecturer or some combination of all three roles?; how many courses you might typically work on at one time?.

If you were to summarise your level of moderation experience and knowledge, would you describe yourself as an expert, experienced, intermediate or novice?

List of the questions:

Lecturer Perspectives – Guiding Principles

1.   What do you think about the key role of internal moderation of assessment in the program generally? What I am thinking of here is your professional view of the importance of the role of moderation to the quality of education that the department offers to students.

Policy and Procedure

2.   What level of knowledge do you have about the policy documents regarding Moderation of Assessment?

3.   Do you have any thoughts about these policy documents? Why?

4.   In your everyday practice, do you find the policy useful or do you find school policy/procedures more useful? Why do you think this is?

5.   If at all, to what degree do you find that the moderation policy and/or practice is helpful in linking the process of internal course moderation to other educational quality processes and compliance procedures?

6.   Can you please tell me about the aspects of the internal moderation of assessment that work well in your school? Why do you think this works well? To what degree do you think institution Policy helps?

Challenges in Practice

7.   Can you please tell me about the aspects of internal moderation of assessment which you find challenging? Why?

8.   Thinking about the challenges to internal moderation, to what degree do you think Institution Policy does or doesn't help?

9.   Can you please tell me if there are any changes to the internal moderation of assessment process within your school which you would like to suggest?

10.   Is there anything else you would like to share about internal moderation of assessment?

Thank you for your time today and sharing your opinions on these questions.

APPENDIX 2:   INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of Dissertation: Internal Moderation of Assessment in an ITP sector Institution: Translating Policy into Practice.

My name is Jean Simpson. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Dissertation course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

My research proposes to examine a research problem which arises because of different approaches to organisation policy related to Internal Moderation, which is reflected in inconsistencies of practice within the Institution. A recent external evaluation of the Institution highlights the research problem, by raising concerns over quality assurance deficiencies in several courses (NZQA, 2016).

The key aims of the research are:
1.   To examine key expectations for moderation policy;
2.   To investigate the practice of internal moderation from the perspectives of lecturers;
3.   To examine the challenges experienced by lecturers during the internal moderation process.

I will be collecting data using an interview schedule and would appreciate being able to interview you at a time that is mutually suitable. I will also be asking you to sign a consent form regarding this event. The interview venue will be agreed with you before the interview and the duration of the interview will be between 30-45 minutes. I will be recording your contribution and I will provide you with a transcript to check for accuracy, which I will ask you to check within a week of receipt.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the dissertation. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

My supervisor is Dr. Jo Howse and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8348 Email: jhowse@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Jean Simpson

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2019-2003
This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Unitec
Institute of Technology
TE WHARE WĀNANGA O WAIRAKA

CONSENT FORM – ADULT PARTICIPANTS

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

DISSERTATION TITLE: Internal Moderation of Assessment in an ITP sector Institution: Translating Policy into Practice.

RESEARCHER (Jean Simpson)

Participant's consent

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I agree to this interview being recorded. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript of the interview for verification and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to two weeks after the return/confirmation of my verified transcript.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2019-2003
This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

DISSERTATIONS

RESEARCH BANK UPLOAD FORM (LIBRARY)

Full name of author: Jean Simpson

Full title of the dissertation: INTERNAL MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT IN AN ITP SECTOR INSTITUTION: TRANSLATING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Practice Pathway: .TE MIRO POSTGRADUATE

Degree: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Year of presentation: 2019

Associated URL link(s) (OPTIONAL for example ORCID ID): ……………………………..

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Josephine Howse

Associate Supervisor: Prof. Carol Cardno

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I agree to a digital copy of my final dissertation being uploaded to the Unitec institutional repository (Research Bank) and being made viewable worldwide.

Signature of author:

Date: 26 November 2019

ADMINISTRATION

Email this form and final PDF of dissertation to David Church dchurch@unitec.ac.nz