

Coordinators Leading Advancement of Sessional Staff (CLASS) Project

Exemplars of Good Practice Initiatives

Psychology – Marker Training and Moderation

EXEMPLAR: Psychology – Marker Training and Moderation

Title: Psychology – Marker Training and Moderation

University : University of Tasmania

Discipline Area: Psychology

**Subject/Unit
Coordinator (optional)** Andrea Carr (Practical Coordinator)

Level of Unit First Year

Number of Students: 350 students

**Number of Sessional
Staff** Up to 10 markers

Delivery Mode: Face to face

Profile: The team of markers for first year psychology assessments consists of tutors and other sessional staff members who may or may not have had marking experience. Very few have teaching backgrounds, but for the most part are completing or have completed a bachelor degree with honours and/or post-graduate studies.

Background/Context: 300-350 pieces of assessment are required to be marked twice per semester. The assessments range in word length from approximately 1000 to 1500 words and take the form of essays or scientific reports. Each marker is limited to between 35-50 pieces of assessment and required to complete the marking within 7- 9 days.

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Good Practice Initiative:

Marker Training:

1. Two or three example assessments are chosen, copied and given to tutors and markers to complete marking.
2. A moderation meeting is held to ensure that markers are achieving similar outcomes on the example assessments.
3. Markers, particularly inexperienced staff, are then asked to take part in an iterative process whereby each marker completes the marking requirements on small number of assessments which are checked, moderated and feedback given to the marker in terms of their consistency and accuracy in marking.
4. This process is repeated a number of times.

The overall marking moderation process is not new, however the iterative process where sessional staff, particularly those who are inexperienced, receive feedback on their marking skills add another dimension to this process. It provides an opportunity to achieve strong inter-rater reliability in marking and also for staff to develop their marking skills in a supported manner.

Tips for Implementation:

It is important for those directing this process to recognise that this is reasonably time consuming. However, long-term this process assists in developing skilled staff that can provide consistent, accurate marks and clear, appropriate feedback to students.

Evaluation:

Feedback from staff, particularly those new to marking, has been overwhelmingly positive. They have indicated that this process has enabled them to develop sound marking skills and build confidence.

From the perspective of the moderator, this process assists in maintaining quality and consistency of marks.

Reflection:

Introducing and maintaining the iterative process to the moderation of marks and training of sessional staff has been time consuming but worthwhile. The pool of trained, supported and valued sessional markers has grown which, obviously relieves the workload stress for all staff.
