

**TO:** **Chief Executive Officer**  
**NZQA Liaison Officer** } **Tertiary Education Organisations**

**ATTENTION:** **NZDipBus Programme Managers**  
**Heads of Business and related departments**  
**Lecturers of NZDipBus papers**

### **New Zealand Diploma in Business: Summary of consultation feedback on national external moderation system**

In recent years, concerns have been expressed in a number of contexts about aspects of the national external moderation system for the NZDipBus. In response to these concerns, and in the light of the current transition to use new prescriptions for the NZDipBus and to version two of the qualification, NZQA decided to review all processes related to the external moderation system.

A survey of TEOs in November and December 2007 was the first step of this review. (Tertiary circular T2007/018 provided the survey and requested feedback.)

**A summary of responses is provided as Appendix I of this circular.**

NZQA thanks all those who responded to the survey. All feedback is being considered as part of the review process.

#### **Next step**

The next step in the process is to workshop some possible changes to the moderation system with TEO representative groups and an NZQA moderator group. Workshops are planned for April 2008. TEOs will subsequently be given further opportunities to provide feedback on any proposed changes.

Nominations for the TEO workshops have been requested from the Business Coordination Forum (of the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand) and New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers.

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Please note NZDipBus tertiary circulars for previous years are available from the NZQA website at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/publications/circulars/tertiary.do>

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **Review of the national external moderation system for the New Zealand Diploma in Business**

#### **Summary of responses to consultation with Tertiary Education Organisations November – December 2007**

##### **1 Background to NZDipBus moderation system review**

The New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus) is a national qualification, owned and administered by NZQA. Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) accredited to offer NZDipBus prescriptions undertake assessment according to their own policies.

Separate moderation systems operate for high volume prescriptions and low volume prescriptions.

- High volume prescriptions are part of the national external moderation process. Assessment materials for these prescriptions are moderated by NZQA cyclically, normally once every three years.
- Low volume prescriptions are covered by TEO internal moderation processes. Assessment materials related to these prescriptions should be internally pre- and post-assessment moderated each delivery cycle. In addition, an external industry person or other TEO must moderate assessment materials every third delivery cycle or within a period of three years, whichever comes first. These moderation processes are subject to audit by NZQA.<sup>1</sup>

These moderation systems have been modified over time but not formally reviewed. In recent years, concerns have been expressed in a number of contexts about aspects of moderation, especially national external moderation. In response to these concerns, and in the light of the current transition to use new prescriptions for the NZDipBus and to version two of the qualification, NZQA decided to review all processes related to the external moderation system. A survey of TEOs and NZQA-contracted moderators formed part of this review.

##### **2 Survey of TEOs**

###### **2.1 Survey purpose**

A survey of accredited TEOs was initiated in November 2007. Its purpose was to collect sector views on the national external moderation system for the NZDipBus in order to:

- identify and clarify issues
- improve NZQA processes
- improve TEO satisfaction.

###### **2.2 Survey distribution**

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<sup>1</sup> Additional information about NZDipBus moderation processes is available on the NZQA website at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications/tertqual/dipbus/moderation.html>.

NZQA tertiary circular T2007/018, 12 November 2007, which included the survey<sup>2</sup>, was sent to Chief Executives and NZDipBus Liaison Officers of the 57 TEOs accredited to offer the NZDipBus, with the request to distribute the circular to their NZDipBus networks, including industry groups or other industry contacts.

Members of the National Advisory Committee on Business Studies (NACBS), Institute of Technology and Polytechnics Quality, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand, and New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers also received copies.

The deadline for returning survey responses to NZQA was 12 December 2007.

NZDipBus moderators contracted by NZQA between December 2005 and December 2007 were separately surveyed.

### **2.3 Number and type of survey responses**

Twenty nine survey responses, representing 25 TEOs, were received. Of the 29 respondents, 16 were from Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs)<sup>3</sup> and 13 from Private Training Establishments (PTEs).

The 25 TEOs represented among the respondents of the survey comprise 42 % of the total number of NZDipBus accredited providers.

Each response was either individual, collective (on behalf of an organisational group or the organisation as a whole), or both individual and collective.

Respondents represented a range of TEO roles that have direct interest in NZDipBus (i.e. lecturer/tutor, liaison officer, manager/coordinator, industry advisory group member). Collective responses were at either the NZDipBus programme team, department/faculty, or organisational level.

One response was by letter rather than by survey form. Key points from this letter have been included under 3.11.

### **2.4 Key points arising from consultation feedback**

Key points arising from the responses are summarised as follows:

- Overall moderation results should be reported in a way that better distinguishes between assessment materials that require minor and those that require major changes to meet the national standard.
- Positive and more constructive comments should be incorporated in the reports.
- The time between TEO submission of materials for moderation and the return of reports from NZQA needs to be shorter.
- Exemplar materials are useful and it would be helpful if more were provided.
- The resubmission process should be changed.
- The timeframe for resubmission of pre-assessment materials for moderation is not sufficient and should be reviewed.

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<sup>2</sup> The circular and survey is available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/publications/circulars/tertiary.do>

<sup>3</sup> Five ITP responses were from the same organisation.

- Whether a separate moderation system for low volume papers is necessary was questioned.
- Most respondents find the clarity and quality of NZQA communication satisfactory or excellent.

A more detailed summary of responses to each section of the survey questionnaire follows.

### 3 Summary of responses

Views summarised in this section are either directly quoted from survey responses (as indicated by quotation marks) or paraphrased.

#### 3.1 Moderation scheduling

Table 1 presents the responses to the question ‘What is your preferred option for the frequency and timing of NZDipBus moderation?’

**Table 1. Preferred option for the frequency and timing of NZDipBus moderation**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
No change to current arrangement	13	10	23
Twice a year	1	2	3
Once a year	1	1	2
Other	0	0	0
No answer	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

A majority of respondents was in favour of maintaining the *status quo* for the frequency and timing of moderation, which is currently twice a year, with submission dates at the end of July and January.

#### 3.2 Amount of moderation

Table 2 presents respondents’ views on the amount of moderation.

**Table 2. Amount of moderation**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
Sufficient	12	12	24
Insufficient	1	0	1
Excessive	3	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

More than 80% of the respondents thought the current amount of moderation – eight prescriptions per year, or four prescriptions per semester – is sufficient. Current arrangements result in each prescription generally being moderated once every three years.

## Moderation reporting

Table 3 presents answers to the question ‘What is your preferred option for how moderation results should be reported?’

**Table 3. Preferred option for how moderation results should be reported**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
No change to current arrangement	1	5	<b>6</b>
Similar to the alternative outlined	9	4	<b>13</b>
Other	4	1	<b>5</b>
Similar &/ or other	1	2	<b>3</b>
No answer	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

A large majority preferred an alternative system similar to that suggested in the survey, with moderation reporting distinguishing between those assessment materials that require minor or major changes to meet the national standard. Some of the respondents here made suggestions for alternatives.

Six respondents were in favour of maintaining the current arrangement.

The current moderation report format includes nine questions focused on assessment materials, marking schedules, and assessor decisions. These questions are:

1. Are all the learning outcomes assessed?
2. Do the assessment activities assess the learning outcomes at an appropriate level as specified in the prescription?
3. Are the prescription’s weightings adhered to?
4. Are the assessment conditions and instructions clear and appropriate?
5. Are the assessments consistent with current good industry practice?
6. Do the marking schedules allow for a range of appropriate student responses?
7. Is the way in which marks are awarded sufficiently detailed to enable consistent marking?
8. Are the marking schedules consistent with the requirements of the prescription and assessment materials? (levels)
9. Was candidates’ work marked consistently according to the marking schedule? (i.e. Did the assessor make similar decisions about answers?)

Table 4 shows the views of respondents about these questions.

**Table 4. Do the nine moderation questions need to be reviewed?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	5	11	<b>16</b>
Yes	11	1	<b>12</b>
No answer	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

‘Yes’ and ‘no’ responses were almost even, but a majority of PTE respondents favoured the *status quo* and a majority of ITP respondents favoured change. Views expressed by some of those favouring change included the following:

- Moderation questions are too prescriptive, focus on trivial issues, and discourage holistic applied assessment.
- Moderation questions promote pedantic assessment of details rather than academic substance.
- There are no clear cut answers to the nine questions and therefore moderation responses can be very subjective.

Some respondents suggested particular questions should be clarified, or removed because they are redundant.

The following table shows how TEOs perceived the feedback/decisions coming from the national moderators.

**Table 5. Is the moderators’ feedback useful?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
All the time	1	3	<b>4</b>
Most of the time	3	7	<b>10</b>
Some of the time	9	1	<b>10</b>
Hardly ever	1	1	<b>2</b>
Some of the time &/or Hardly ever	0	1	<b>1</b>
No answer	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

A majority responded that the moderators’ feedback is useful ‘most of the time’ or ‘some of the time.’ Views expressed by some of those indicating ‘some of the time’ included:

- “Feedback is too generic and short, focuses on small issues, and sometimes has little or no academic value.”
- “Positive feedback should be included, as well as suggestions for improvement.”

Part of moderation reporting is the provision of the national external moderation summary report to every TEO who submitted materials for moderation. The table below shows how respondents perceive the usefulness of the summary report.

**Table 6. Usefulness of the national external moderation summary report**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
Useful	11	10	<b>21</b>
Not useful	3	3	<b>6</b>
No answer	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

The majority of respondents agreed that the National External Moderation Summary Report is useful.

### General comments on moderation reporting

Of the 18 responses to this section, four expressed concern at the time taken to return moderation reports to TEOs.

Three respondents commented on what they thought were inconsistencies in moderation reports; for example, contrasting recommendations in the summary report compared with the individual TEO moderation report, and differing overall moderation results for the same assessment materials in two different moderation rounds. Another two respondents thought that the term 'national standard' needs to be clarified.

Two respondents would like to see more constructive comments in the report, and one respondent thought moderation should be about improving quality of assessments, not simply identifying non-compliance.

### 3.3 Moderation feedback response form

A respondent suggested making the moderation report feedback form available on the NZQA website so that it can be completed online.

Other responses were relevant to the previous section on moderation reporting rather than the moderation feedback response form.

### 3.4 Appeals

Tables 7 to 9 present respondents' views on the efficiency of the current appeals process.

**Table 7. Have you ever disagreed with moderation comments or decisions in your organisation's moderation reports?**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
Yes	12	5	17
No	1	8	9
No answer	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 8. Did your organisation appeal the moderation result?**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
Yes	8	3	11
No	2	2	4
Yes &/or No	1	0	1
No answer	5	8	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 9. Is your organisation able to meet the current timeframe for an appeal?**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
Yes	6	8	<b>14</b>
No	5	3	<b>8</b>
No answer	5	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

Most respondents commented that they had disagreed with a moderation comment or decision regarding their submitted materials. However, not all had subsequently lodged an appeal. A number of respondents considered that appealing a moderation result that occurred several months previously was not worth the effort.

Table 9 shows that most TEOs are able to meet the current timeframe for lodging an appeal, which is within three weeks of the date of the moderation results letter. Those who cannot noted a number of contributing factors. Suggestions included extending the time frame to six weeks or allowing flexibility for a longer appeal period when approached by individual TEOs, and having an appeal evaluated by someone other than the original moderator.

### **3.5 Resubmission of assessment materials that did not meet the national standard**

Suggestions on the appropriate timeframe for pre-assessment resubmission included:

- one to two months before the next delivery
- at the same time as post-assessment resubmission.

A comment was made that there should be no pre-assessment resubmission because they “do not consider that it is good practice to re-use assessment materials.”

Several respondents noted that the time taken to return moderation reports impacts on the TEOs’ ability to comply with the resubmission requirements.

Table 10 presents the respondents’ views on whether the resubmission process should be changed.

**Table 10. Would you like any changes made to the resubmission process?**

Responses	ITPs	PTEs	Total
No	2	9	<b>11</b>
Yes	12	3	<b>15</b>
No answer	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

A small majority of respondents would like the resubmission process to change. However, there were significant sector differences, with most ITP respondents favouring change, and most PTE respondents favouring the *status quo*.

### 3.6 Exemplars

Table 11 presents the respondents' views on the usefulness of exemplar materials.

**Table 11. How useful were the exemplars that have been provided in the last two years?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
Useful	7	10	<b>17</b>
Not useful	5	1	<b>6</b>
Have not seen any exemplars in the last 2 years	3	1	<b>4</b>
No answer	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

Most TEO respondents find exemplars useful. Respondents commented that more exemplars should be available across all prescriptions. Recommendations included:

- a summary of reasons for exemplar selection should accompany the material
- copyright issues should be addressed before distribution.

### 3.7 Low volume audit process

Of the 11 responses in this section, seven questioned the need to have two levels of moderation processes (high volume and low volume). It was suggested that the low volume audit (LVA) should be limited to local prescriptions. A comment was also made about the lack of clarity of the LVA process.

### 3.8 Moderators and the moderation panel composition

Of the 14 responses to this section, six questioned the need for an industry moderator. Responses suggest that someone without teaching experience is unsuitable to evaluate assessments, and only academics, or industry people with appropriate teaching experience, should be moderators.

### 3.9 NZQA communications

Generally, feedback was positive with regards to NZQA communications, as shown below.

**Table 13. How clear are the following communications?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>ITPs</b>	<b>PTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Website</b>			
Excellent	7	3	<b>10</b>
Satisfactory	4	5	<b>9</b>
Needs improvement	1	3	<b>4</b>
No answer	4	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Circular</b>			
Excellent	8	4	<b>12</b>
Satisfactory	5	6	<b>11</b>
Needs improvement	0	1	<b>1</b>
No answer	3	2	<b>5</b>
<b>Email</b>			
Excellent	8	4	<b>12</b>
Satisfactory	4	5	<b>9</b>
Needs improvement	0	2	<b>2</b>
No answer	4	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Phone</b>			
Excellent	7	1	<b>8</b>
Satisfactory	3	6	<b>9</b>
Needs improvement	1	2	<b>3</b>
No answer	5	4	<b>9</b>
<b>Letter</b>			
Excellent	6	4	<b>10</b>
Satisfactory	4	5	<b>9</b>
Needs improvement	0	1	<b>1</b>
No answer	6	3	<b>9</b>

### 3.10 General comments

Respondents were invited to make any general comments relevant to the review of the national external moderation process. The following summarises the range of views expressed in this section:

- The high level of non-compliance indicates the difficulties lecturers have in recognising what constitutes the ‘national standard.’ It is reiterated that clarification of the term ‘national standard’ be made to all TEOs concerned.
- In connection to the point above, more exemplars would provide guidance as to the standard required.
- Other possible processes/models for national external moderation should be considered, not just a modification of the current system. A move to an empowering and localised form of quality assurance based on provider self-assessment, which is an international practice, was suggested.
- The current national external moderation system wastes resources because it does not affect what happens in classrooms.

- The moderation process is negative and pedantic rather than constructive.
- The process of dealing with TAM has become smoother and more cooperative over recent years.