

Unit	1061
Title	Contribute to Quality Assurance Process in Assessment
Document type	Learning Resource



In consultation with industry subject matter experts, the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) facilitated the production of this material.

Printed copies are considered uncontrolled and may be outdated. Current versions are available from the BCFSC. Refer to <https://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2823> for more information.

Feedback is welcome and may be sent to training@bcforestsafe.org.

Table of Contents

Unit Introduction.....	4
Section 1061-1: Moderation and Validation	5
Key Point 1.1: Definitions of Moderation and Validation	6
Moderation.....	6
Validation	6
Key Point 1.2: Contributing to a Quality Assurance Process.....	7
Key Point 1.3: Version Control and Documentation	10
Section 1061-2: Moderation and Validation Process and Decisions.....	12
Key Point 2.1: Moderating Assessment Decisions.....	13
Key Point 2.2: Validation and Moderation Outcomes.....	15
Key Point 2.3: Implementing Change	17
Self-Quiz.....	18
Self-Quiz Answers.....	19

Unit Introduction

By the end of this unit you will be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

- The definition of moderation and validation
- How moderation and validation contribute to quality assurance
- How to collect and arrange relevant assessment documents
- Moderate other Assessors' decisions
- Tasks and outcomes related to moderation and validation activities
- Implement changes to assessment practices

Section 1061-1: Moderation and Validation

What you will learn in this section

By the end of this section you will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following key points:

- 1.1 Definitions of moderation and validation
- 1.2 Contributing to a quality assurance process
- 1.3 Version control and documentation

Key Point 1.1: Definitions of Moderation and Validation

Moderation

Moderation is the process of bringing assessment judgments into alignment so that the assessment decisions are reliable and defensible.

The purpose of moderation activities are to ensure that all Assessors are interpreting the benchmarks or outcomes the same, and making the same assessment decisions against the Unit of Competency in the relevant package.

Validation

Validation is the quality assurance process that supports continuous improvement.

Validation activities are often matched to moderation activities as they go hand-in-hand. Validation is a review process of all documentation, systems, and processes related to the assessment tools and supporting products and documentation.



REMEMBER!

Moderation and validation are key activities in an industry training and assessment model.

Key Point 1.2: Contributing to a Quality Assurance Process

Moderation and validation activities are essential parts of the quality assurance process in competency-based systems. They help maintain the process to a desired standard.

Moderation and validation sessions are co-facilitated by internal and external verifiers or their equivalent, and focus on quality improvements.

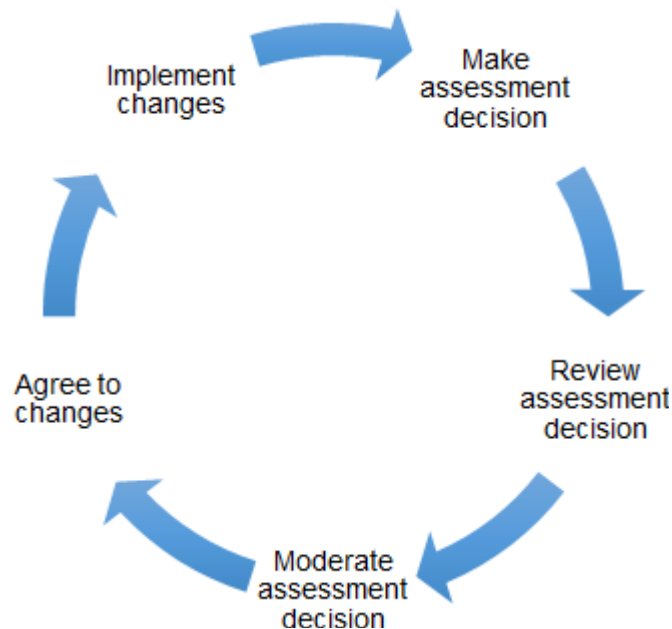


Figure 1: Moderation cycle

Best practice is to have regular moderation sessions when the judgment, reasoning, and evidence are fresh in the Assessor's mind. The number of moderation sessions that a sector or occupation has are dependent on the frequency of assessments and cost-effectiveness of the moderation activities.

Another best practice is to have a moderation session every six months and a minimum of once a calendar year. Moderation activities are part of the requirements for an Assessor to remain active and current as an Assessor and attendance is not optional. Moderation and validation activities are essential components of any competency-based system.

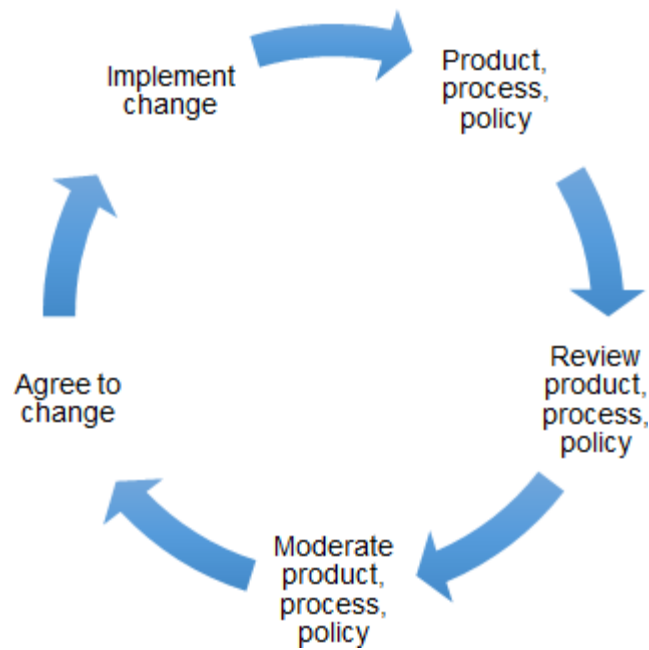


Figure 2: Validation activities follow a similar process

The validation process involves the following:

- Collection of potential or known issues
- Collective review of the issues
- An agreement in writing of the procedures and timelines for changes

A person is nominated (generally the internal verifier) to lead the change and ensure that it is carried out. Validation ensures that the product, policy and procedures work, and that stakeholder's follow them.

In new systems, validation sessions will be conducted on a regular basis. Once the system is mature, less validation sessions will be required.

On the other hand, moderation sessions will continue to occur on a regular basis because of the following:

- Geographic distances
- Assessors working alone
- New Assessors entering the system
- Changes to the occupation or standards



Learning Point

An Assessor likes to work on his/her own, and tends to call in “sick” when it is time to attend moderation and validation activities. What should be done?

If attendance is required to maintain active status, how would this situation be handled?

Key Point 1.3: Version Control and Documentation

It is critical that the administrative body have a document control procedure in place to ensure that the documents and tools used by the Assessors and other parties are correct, up-to-date and the latest versions. This is also important for moderation and validation activities.

Each Administrator should have a mechanism in place to collect issues and comments to bring forward at moderation and validation sessions. This information can be collected in the form of an action report, stored in a central location, and used by all relevant stakeholders. This allows users to see if their concerns have been recorded and what other issues may be of concern.

An action report generally includes:

- A tracking mechanism
- A locator to reference the issue
- The issue
- Suggested change
- Placeholder to capture change
- Approval personnel for the change
- Implementation plan or date

Documentation required for moderation sessions include:

- Package related to the occupation including Units of Competency
- Assessment tools
- Documentation and evidence related to assessment decisions that will be moderated
- Action reports

Documentation required for validation sessions include:

- Package related to the occupation including units of competency
- SOPs related to training and assessment

Other documentation includes:

- Policies
- Procedures
- Assessment tools
- Action reports



Learning Point

A moderation workshop is set to take place. The agenda is sent out and is general in nature. The organizer reminds everyone to bring his or her paperwork and issues to the workshop. On the day of the workshop some have brought paperwork, others have not, and version control is spotty at best.

What should have been done before the workshop?

Section 1061-2: Moderation and Validation Process and Decisions

What you will learn in this section

By the end of this section you will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following key points:

- 2.1 Moderating assessment decisions
- 2.2 Validation and moderation outcomes
- 2.3 Implementing change

Key Point 2.1: Moderating Assessment Decisions

As mentioned previously, moderation is the process of aligning assessment judgments. The purpose of moderation activities is to ensure that all Trainers and Assessors are interpreting the standards in the same way and making identical assessment decisions against the Unit of Competency in the relevant package.

Moderating each other's assessment decisions is fraught with risk. No one likes to be criticized so following these steps will help ensure a productive session:

1. Each Assessor identifies one or two files that they would like feedback on.
2. The Assessor identifies what went well and what the issues are.
3. The other Assessors employ a constructive response focusing on fact, the benchmarks, and the evidence rubric.
4. The other Assessors have empathy for the situation and concrete suggestions to improve.
5. Keep the focus on the benchmarks and not on personal opinion.

When moderating, remember the process is criterion-based. Candidates are found either "competent" or "not yet competent." In other words, they have "met the outcomes" or "have not yet met the outcomes."

Demonstrated evidence must include confirmation:

- That the underpinning knowledge required for the job is recorded with a focus on safety critical or industry identified critical knowledge
- Of the ability to do the individual task required for the job
- Of the ability to manage the multiple tasks required to do the job
- Of attributes required for the job
- Of the ability to adjust when things go wrong and transfer skills to other environments
- That the candidate follows workplace policy and procedures including getting along with others
- Of the evidences above being demonstrated multiple times in a variety of contexts where safety or critical skills have been identified
- That the outcomes of the Unit of Competency have been demonstrated and the evidence on file is valid, sufficient, authentic, and current

If the Assessor is able to answer “yes” to each statement, then the candidate meets the outcome. Credit of completion of a Unit of Competency cannot be given until all outcomes of the unit have been met.

One type of evidence or assessment tool rarely demonstrates competency. Statements listed in the “Evidence to be assessed” must be demonstrated multiple times in a variety of contexts to ensure competency has been achieved and is transferable. To ensure sufficiency of evidence, the evidence rubric should be reviewed.



REMEMBER!

Key outcomes of moderation activities include:



- Difficult decisions are moderated
- Agreement based on evidence
- Agreement on changes to the assessment process or interpretation of benchmarks or evidence requirements
- Timelines on implementation of changes

Key Point 2.2: Validation and Moderation Outcomes

There are numerous ways to conduct validation activities but at the end of the validation activities the following should have occurred:

- Changes to documentation policy and procedures should be agreed upon
- A plan with timelines to enact the change or approvals as required
- Where agreement is not found, an action plan to move forward with items that cannot be resolved in the session must be put in place

The process must be transparent and produced through consensus while taking into consideration existing policy, procedures, legislation, and regulation.

Like validation sessions, there are various formats that can be used to conduct moderation sessions. However, the following events should have occurred:

- Moderating of difficult assessment decisions
- Agreement based on evidence of decisions
- Agreement on any changes to the assessment process, or interpretation of benchmarks, or evidence requirements

REMEMBER!

Key outcomes of validation activities include:



- Changes to documentation, policy, processes or procedures
- A plan to enact changes including timelines
- An action plan for items that were not agreed upon or did not have time for
- Assessor training if required
- Timelines for change to be implemented

Learning Point



The Assessors have been getting together for moderation and validation sessions for a number of years. Many are good friends and the atmosphere is jovial. War stories are shared, hunting trips revisited and as a result valuable time is lost.

What are some helpful ways to keep this from happening during the workshop?

Key Point 2.3: Implementing Change

At the heart of any quality system is implementation of change when it is required. Quality in a system cannot be maintained if monitoring of a system and subsequent recognized changes do not occur when required. From a quality assurance perspective, this means having clear policies and procedures and evidence that those policies and procedures are being followed.

Implementation on the validation side is the easier of the two as the changes are often black and white and are easily documented. The implementation on the moderation side is more difficult and harder to measure as it can involve attitudes, preconceived ideas, and lack of understanding or even knowing that a lack exists.

Moderation activities showcase the best and the worst in terms of assessment decisions. Assessors must approach this process with an open mind, a willingness to change, and to support fellow Assessors in the assessment journey.

The implementation of moderation decisions can be hindered by:

- Bias
- Preconceptions
- Misconceptions
- Attitudes
- Lack of understanding
- Not knowing that you don't know
- Conflict of interest



Learning Point

Six Assessors meet for moderation and validation activities. One of the Assessors is having a difficult time in his personal life and it is spilling over into his professional life. He thinks the improvements agreed upon in the meeting are a waste of time.

How should this be handled?

Self-Quiz

1. What is moderation?
 - Review of policy related to assessment
 - Facilitating a group session
 - Bringing assessment judgements into alignment
 - Review of Standards
2. What can improve a moderation session?
 - Review of policy and procedures
 - Updating relevant documents
 - Being prepared
 - Making it personal
3. What can hinder moderation and validation decisions from being implemented?
 - Detailed goals
 - Bias
 - Group think
 - Lack of moderation plan



Now check your answers on the next page.

Self-Quiz Answers

1. What is moderation?

Answer: **Bringing assessment judgements into alignment**

2. What can improve a moderation session?

Answer: **Being prepared**

3. What can hinder moderation and validation decisions from being implemented?

Answer: **Bias**