



Statistical moderation of VCE coursework

Assessment in the VCE

VCE studies, except for VCE VET studies, have three graded assessments in Units 3 and 4. VCE VET studies have two graded assessments. In each study the graded assessments include a mix of school-based assessment and external examination, and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) combines each student's scores for these assessments into a single Study Score.

The external examinations may be written, performance or oral examinations. There are two forms of school assessment – *coursework assessment* and *School-assessed Tasks*. Most studies, including VCE VET studies, have coursework as the form of school assessment. The studies that have School-assessed Tasks are Art, Design and Technology, Food and Technology, Media, Studio Arts, Systems and Technology and Visual Communication and Design.

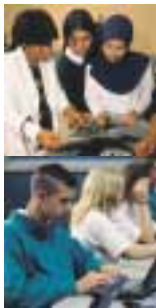
Details of the graded assessments in each study are provided in VCE Study Designs, Assessment Guides and other VCAA publications. This pamphlet explains the statistical moderation procedures to be used by the VCAA to ensure that schools' coursework assessments are made comparable across the State and are fair to all students.

What is moderation?

Moderation is a process of ensuring that the same assessment standards are applied to students from every school doing a particular study. Statistical moderation is a process for adjusting schools' assessments to the same standard, while maintaining the students' rank order given by the school. The VCAA will use statistical moderation to ensure that the coursework assessments given by different schools are comparable throughout the State.

STATISTICAL MODERATION in the VCE





Why is moderation needed?

School assessment is an important part of the VCE. In many studies it counts for 50% of students' assessments. It is important that the assessments made by all schools throughout the State are comparable and fair to all students.

The VCE gives teachers some flexibility in deciding exactly what teaching and learning activities and what coursework assessment tasks they will use to assess the learning outcomes specified in each Study Design. As a result, the coursework assessments from two different schools will sometimes be based on two different sets of assessment activities, although they will be assessing the same learning outcomes.

In some cases, the assessment tasks or topics set by one school may be easier than those set by another school. As well, the marking by the teachers in one school may be stricter or more generous than the marking in another school.

In a school where assessment tasks are easier and marking is generous, students would get higher marks for the same standard of work than they would in another school where the assessments and marking are harder. If we do not take account of this when using schools' assessments to calculate the students' Study Scores, some students would be treated unfairly.

Moderation is needed to ensure that schools' assessments are comparable, and thus fair for all students throughout the State, whichever school they attend.

How does statistical moderation work?

Statistical moderation is a process for adjusting the level and spread of each school's assessments of its students in a particular study, to match the level and spread of the same students' scores on a common external score. Because the external score is based on examinations done by all students across the State, it is a common standard against which schools' assessments can be compared.

Each VCE study includes at least one external examination and the VCAA will use the examination scores in each study as the basis for statistical moderation of schools' assessments. In studies with two examinations, scores from both examinations will be used.

The VCE assessment program also includes the General Achievement Test (GAT). Rather than using examination scores alone, statistical moderation will use students' GAT and examination scores in studies where in doing so a better match with schools' assessments throughout the state is achieved. In all such cases, the examination scores will always be the major influence.

The first step in moderating schools' assessments in each study is to identify the moderation group for each study at each school.

For example, the moderation group for Legal Studies at a particular school is all the students doing Legal Studies at that school. If there are a number of Legal Studies classes at the school, the students in all the classes constitute the moderation group.

If a school has only a very small number of students doing a study, then it will need to combine with another school for moderation purposes. When this happens, students from both schools doing that study constitute the moderation group.

Some students have results that need special treatment. The results for these students are initially left out of the moderation process, and the moderated scores for these students are calculated later, in line with the rest of the group. Results are removed for students who do not have complete coursework assessments, examination scores or GAT scores (in studies where the GAT scores are used in the moderation process).

The second step is to form an external score for each student doing the study, based on their examination scores for the study and, for a number of studies, using their GAT scores as well. These external scores are used as the common standard for all schools teaching that study.

The third step is to use the external scores of the moderation group to adjust the school coursework scores for the group. To do this, the moderation procedure ensures that:

- the highest* moderated score is made equal to the highest external score
- the median* and quartiles* of the moderated scores are made equal to the median and quartiles of the external scores.

The moderation procedure aims to make the mean (average) of the moderated scores as close as possible to the mean of the external scores. The procedure is then applied to the school's coursework score for each student to obtain their moderated coursework score.

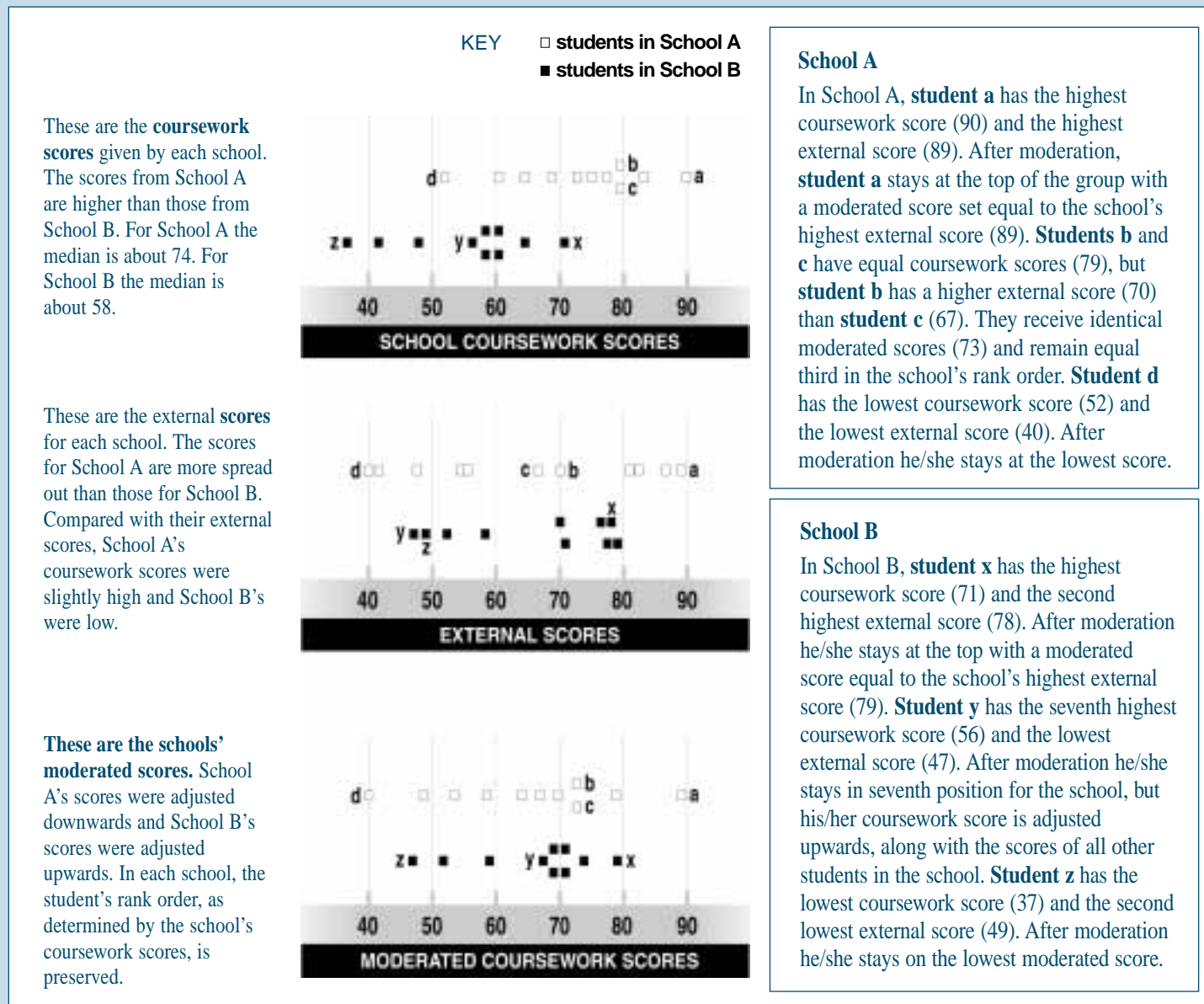
The moderation procedure is not influenced by students with anomalously low external performance, or by students who did very poorly on the school assessment but very well on the external assessment.



* The highest, median and quartiles are scores at the top, middle, 25% and 75% positions in large groups.

The outcomes of statistical moderation

Below is an example of the outcomes of statistical moderation of the Accounting assessments given by two schools. The school coursework, external and moderated coursework scores for the two schools are plotted on the same scale of 0 to 100.



This example shows that the coursework scores of both schools have been adjusted to the same standard. Differences in the schools' marking have been removed so that the students in each school received final moderated scores that more fairly reflect their relative level of achievement.

Key points to remember

- Statistical moderation is required so that school assessments can be used fairly as part of VCE assessment. It ensures that the assessment of all students, no matter what school they attend, is comparable and fair.
- Statistical moderation adjusts schools' assessments in accordance with students' scores on common external examinations.
- Any adjustment to a student's score is determined by the external scores for the whole group, not by the student's own external score.
- Statistical moderation does not change the rank order of students, as determined by the school's coursework scores. A student given the top score for coursework by his/her school will have the top score after statistical moderation, no matter how they perform on the examination/s.
- Students with consideration of disadvantage or unusual performance on the examinations will not affect the moderation process.
- Students who do not complete their examinations will still have their coursework scores statistically moderated, using information from the rest of the group.



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