

RATIFICATION OF RESULTS: QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Ratification of Results Quality Assurance Framework underpins the processes and articulates the framework supporting the ratification of results and comprises:

1. Five **Overarching Principles**
2. A set of **Quality Standards**
3. The **Quality Assurance Cycle** with Expected Actions
4. A set of **Supporting Documents** to encourage consistency in the processes ('plan') and reporting ('check') stages of the Cycle.

The Framework is visually represented in Appendix A.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The Framework has been developed based on five overarching principles:

- **Fairness:** just and reasonable action in accordance with accepted rules or principles. Procedural fairness requires that all cases be treated in essentially the same way, subject to the same or equivalent scrutiny, and evaluated using the same or equivalent rules and procedures.
- **Transparency:** the open provision of information. Transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to access and examine process, information, discussion and decision making.
- **Objectivity:** the state or quality of being objective, just and unbiased. Objectivity involves informed and unguarded discussion and review.
- **Reliability:** an indication of consistency. Reliability determines the degree to which processes produce consistent outcomes, and perform their intended function, across varying settings. Information and data must be valid to ensure reliability.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement:** an ongoing effort to improve quality. Continuous Quality Improvement involves incremental and/or breakthrough improvement of processes that lead to the achievement of higher levels of quality.

It is expected that these five principles will be recognised and embedded in all aspects of the quality assurance processes in each Faculty.

QUALITY STANDARDS

The six Quality Standards are key elements of the Quality Assurance Framework:

- **Moderated standards-based assessment:** Assessment is standards-based and is subject to moderation, as outlined in the *Moderation Framework*.
- **Moderated grading:** Grading reflects achievement against the approved standards, and these standards observe the broader University policies on grading and assessment. Grading is subject to moderation, as outlined in the *Moderation Framework*.
- **Identification and reporting of quality issues:** Unexpected results and significant issues are identified and reported.
- **Robust discussion of quality issues:** Unexpected results and significant issues are robustly and objectively discussed.
- **Commitment to resolution of quality issues:** Strategies to address unexpected results and significant issues are proposed, and implemented, to promote continuous quality improvement and conclude a cycle of quality enhancement.
- **Transparent and improvement-focussed processes:** Reporting, review, strategy proposals, progress and outcomes are documented.

In developing the Standards for the Framework, ensuring *fairness, transparency, objectivity and reliability* in the processes and reporting, and promoting *continuous quality improvement* in the review and monitoring components are recognised as important.

QUALITY ASSURANCE CYCLE

The Quality Assurance Cycle is divided into five stages: Plan, Act, Check, Monitor and Improve. These stages do not stand in isolation from one another and, in fact, must feed into each other to promote continuous quality improvement.

Each stage of the Cycle has a set of Expected Actions which support the evaluation and measurement of performance against the Standards, and contribute to continuous improvement.

Stage	Expected actions	Supporting documents
1. Plan	1.1. Each Faculty establishes processes to monitor the ratification of results process against the Quality Standards. These should include sub-processes at the unit and department and/or Faculty level.	<i>Example process/es to illustrate application of framework within a Faculty, including a statement of function for the various tiers in the ratification of results process.</i>
	1.2 Each Faculty evaluates its processes periodically.	
2. Act	2.1. Each Faculty monitors its performance against the Quality Standards, as per the established Faculty processes.	Example reporting models/standardised templates to illustrate the type of information, and level of detail, expected at the various tiers in the ratification of results process.
	2.2. Each Faculty identifies unexpected results or significant issues in relation to the Quality Standards.	
3. Check	3.1. Each Faculty reports on its performance against the Quality Standards.	<i>Example reporting model/standardised templates to illustrate the type of information, and level of detail, expected at the various tiers in the ratification of results process.</i>
	3.2. Each Faculty reports unexpected results or significant issues in relation to the Quality Standards.	
	3.3. Each Faculty initiates a review of its processes and/or units periodically, or in response to identified issues. Where a review of a unit is required, this should feed into the broader <i>Program and Unit Review Cycle</i> .	
4. Monitor	4.1. The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) will monitor and review processes in accordance with the annual review cycle.	
5. Improve	5.1. Where an issue is identified, the Unit Convenor and/or Department or appropriate Associate Dean will propose strategies to respond to this issue. These proposed strategies are documented and an evaluation of their effectiveness is provided after the next offering. This should feed into the broader <i>Program and Unit Review Cycle</i> .	
	5.2. Each Faculty proposes and implements changes to its processes to address identified issues, where relevant.	
	5.3. Where broad and systemic issues are identified by the Faculty, they will recommend amendments to University rules, policies or frameworks to ASQC for consideration and/or approval.	

RESULTS OF UNITS THAT FALL OUTSIDE STANDARD FACULTY BOARD MEETINGS

Broadly there will be two categories of units where this might occur:

1. Incomplete Grades (I-Grades)

I-Grades may occur for a variety of reasons and by definition would need to be considered outside of the schedule for ratification of results, however Faculty-level scrutiny should be required in some cases to assure the quality of the processes followed.

I-Grades can be broadly categorised into two groups:

- Cohort based cases; and
- Other cases

Group	Faculty Board Action	Department Reports to the Faculty Board
<p>Cohort-based cases where all or a substantial proportion (more than 60%) of the marks in an entire cohort in a unit were unavailable <i>(e.g. if there were issues with overseas moderation, or practical reports from placements)</i></p>	<p>In this case Faculty Boards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ratify I-grades by flying minute (<i>the exact process to be determined by the Faculty</i>) as long as the relevant Department had provided the Faculty Board meeting with detailed information about the ratification processes that were to be followed. 	<p>In both cases: if the proportion of I-grades in a unit reached a level that may impact the grade distribution, the Department should report to Faculty Board in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 or more I-grades in units less than 200 enrolled • 5% or more of I-grades in units with 200 or more enrolled <p>The report should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original grade distribution • the updated grade distribution after resolution of I-grades • comment regarding any unusual or significant deviations from the original results
<p>Other cases where, typically, the results of individual student(s) were unavailable because of incomplete marks/assessment tasks.</p>	<p>In this case Faculty Boards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delegate authority to sign-off the results with an appropriate individual. 	

2. Units that are assessed outside of the university’s semester timetable

For any units where the results need to be ratified outside of a main Faculty Board meeting Faculties should establish processes to ensure the results are monitored against the Quality Standards.

The Unit Convenor should complete the Unit Summary Report and provide it to the Head of Department in the usual way. Faculties should determine whether the marks of individual units should be signed off by the Associate Dean by executive action, or by a formal meeting or sub-group of Faculty Board. This decision should be made to accommodate any specific risk indicators, such as a large number of students within the units concerned. The process to be followed should be consistent throughout the course of an academic year.

To enable Faculties to effectively monitor its processes for these units any issues that are identified in the Unit Summary Report and any proposed strategies or changes that are being implemented should be reported after the fact to the next available Faculty Board meeting. This will allow Faculties to identify any outstanding action items and any points of concerns or positive outcomes in its next faculty-level summary.

APPENDIX A

CONTINUOUS
QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT

Moderated standards-based assessment	Moderated grading
Identification and reporting of issues	Robust and objective discussion of quality issues
Commitment to resolution of quality issues	Transparent and improvement-focused processes

RELIABILITY

OBJECTIVITY

PLAN

IMPROVE

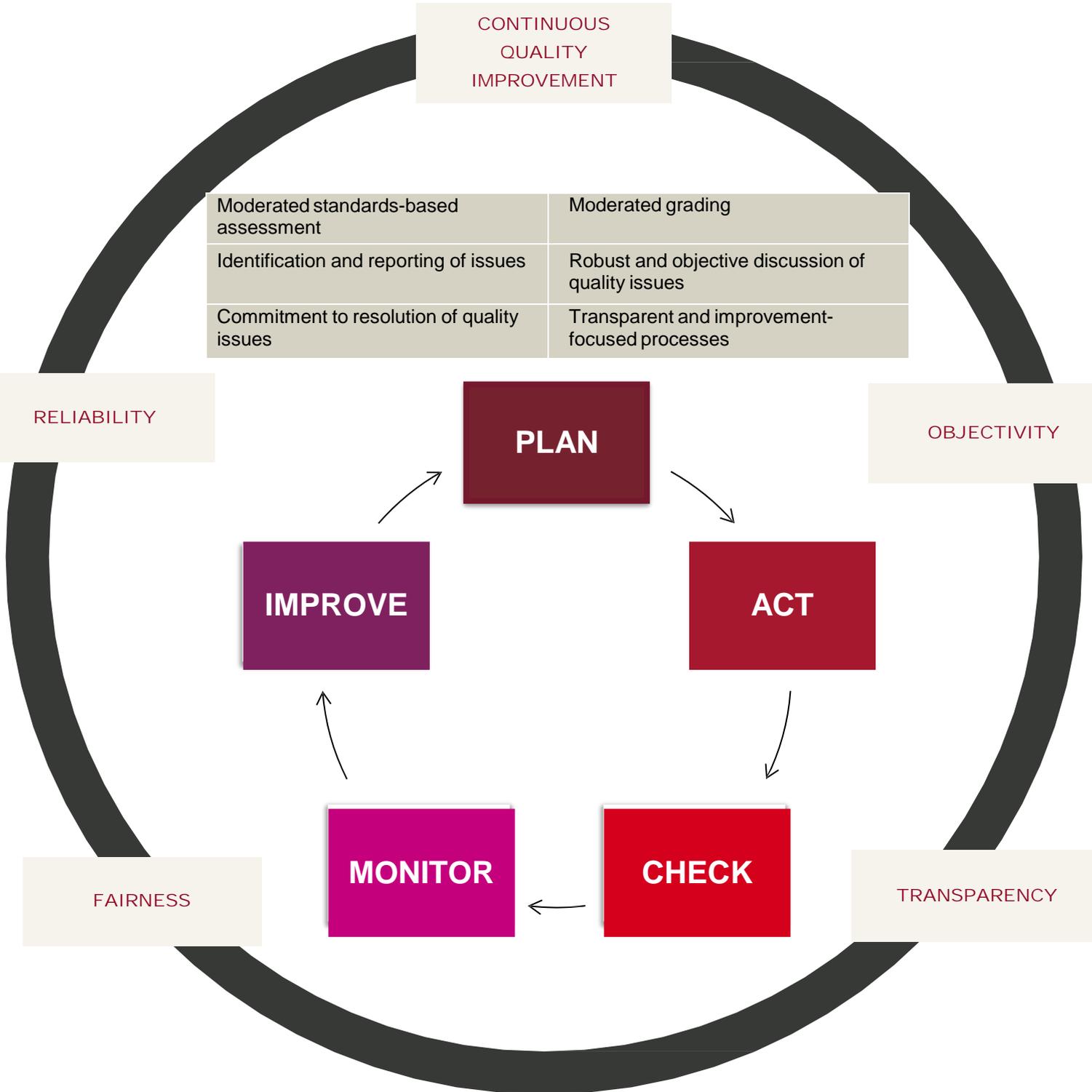
ACT

FAIRNESS

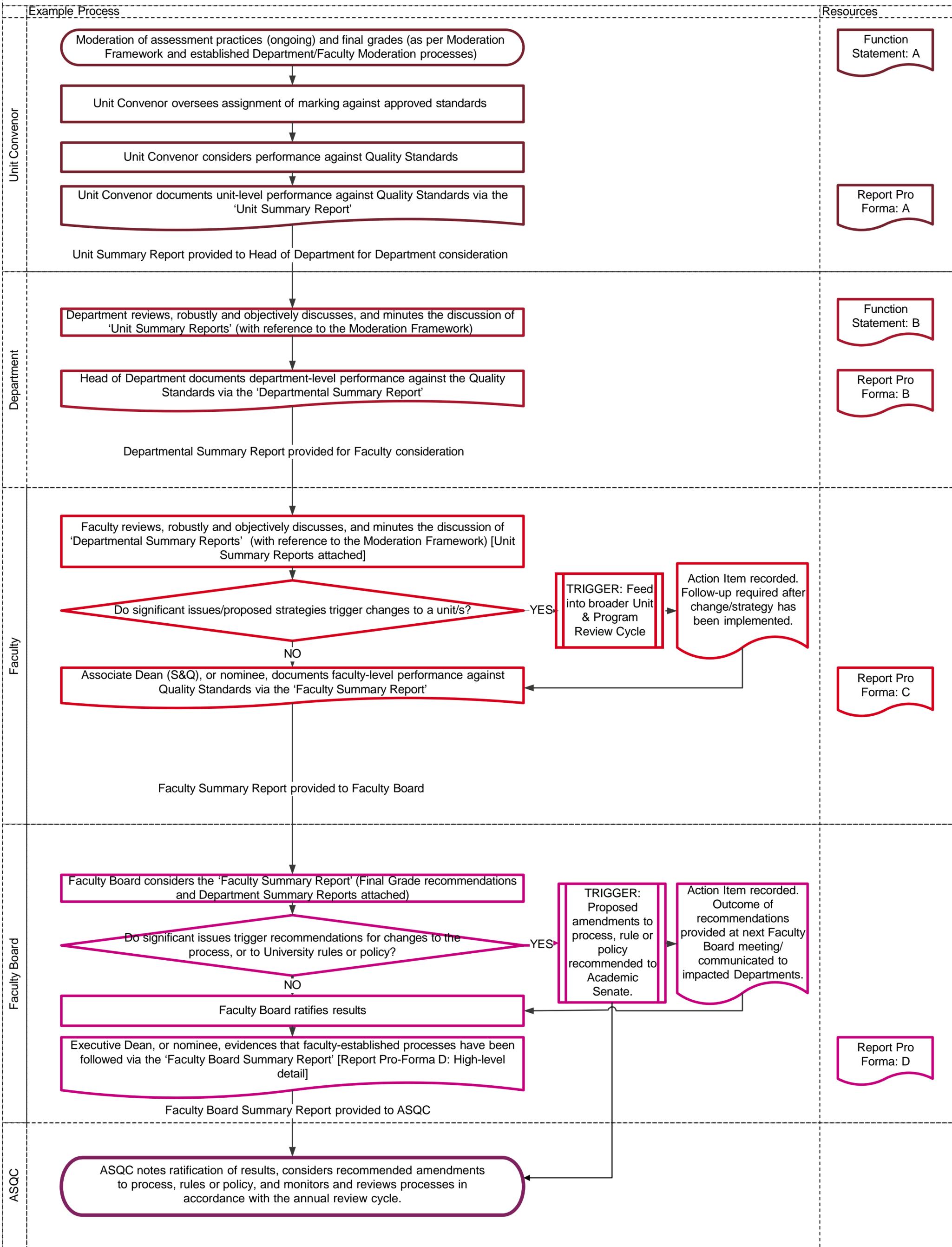
TRANSPARENCY

MONITOR

CHECK



Example Process: Ratification of Results



Standardised Content for Report Templates

	UNIT SUMMARY REPORT	DEPARTMENT SUMMARY REPORT	FACULTY (QUALITY) SUMMARY REPORT	FACULTY SUMMARY REPORT
REPORT PRO-FORMA	<p>REPORT PRO FORMA A</p> <p>Detailed summary of individual unit information. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on Unit Convenor Summary Report from previous offering • Comment on any issues that were previously raised and how these were addressed in the unit's current offering • Comment on any changes to the unit and how these changes impacted cohort performance (compared with previous offerings) • Evidence of moderation practices: in setting standards, designing assessment and grading • Identifying noteworthy or unexpected results or experiences • Any proposed amendments to unit following experiences/results/evaluation for the given session (and in light of cohort performance) 	<p>REPORT PRO FORMA B</p> <p>Medium-level summary of overall departmental information. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on any ongoing issues • Update on any outstanding action items from the last Faculty Assessment meeting • Report on changes to units which significantly impacted cohort performance (compared with previous offerings) • Evidence of moderation practices: in setting standards, designing assessment and grading • Report on any issues with units being offered for the first time • In light of cohort performance, suggest amendments to teaching strategies, units and/or relevant policies or rules of the University • Report on any issues, points of concern or positive outcomes that the department wishes to highlight 	<p>REPORT PRO FORMA C</p> <p>High-level summary of overall departmental information. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noteworthy issues, such as matters relating to moderation practices, units offered for the first time or significant changes to units which had an impact on cohort performance • Outlining Departmental quality assurance process • In light of cohort performance, suggest amendments to teaching strategies, units and/or relevant policies or rules of the University • Department Summary Reports and/or Minutes attached for information 	<p>REPORT PRO FORMA D</p> <p>High-level summary of overall faculty information. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that a quality assurance process has been established, and followed • Identification of common/overall themes • Highlight/extracts from Department Assessment meeting minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing issues/outstanding action items • Issues/points of concern/positive outcomes • Suggest amendments to teaching strategies, units and/or relevant policies or rules of the University • Faculty (Quality) Summary Reports and/or Minutes attached for information
AUDIENCE	Department Faculty	Faculty	Faculty Board	ASQC
AUTHOR	Unit Convenor/s	Head/s of Department	Associate Dean (S&Q), or nominee	Executive Dean, or nominee



RATIFICATION OF EXAM RESULTS FACULTY SUMMARY REPORT PRO-FORMA D

To be completed by the Executive Dean, for presentation to ASQC within 7 days of the release of student results under the Ratification of Results Quality Framework.

(This report should be a high-level overview/summary of overall faculty information with a suggested length between 1-2 pages. Detailed information should be kept within the Faculty.)

Teaching Session of Report:

Summary of Quality Assurance Processes:

- Overview of the Faculty process to monitor the ratification of results against the Quality Standards, including sub-processes at the unit and department and/or Faculty level
- Confirmation that the results for the session have been ratified

Summary of Issues:

- High-level overview of any broad and/or systemic issues identified as part of the Ratification of Results process (this may include positive outcomes if noteworthy)

Summary of Actions:

- High-level overview of any alterations to patterns of results made at any level (e.g. Department/Program Assessment Meeting, FSQC, Faculty Board)
- High-level overview of proposed actions/ strategies to address issues identified (e.g. changes to teaching strategies in one or more units)

Recommendations:

- Recommended changes to any University Rules, Policies, and/or Frameworks proposed for consideration by ASQC

Review of Actions from previous year's reports (if applicable):

(i.e. for Reports from Sessions 1 and 2 of previous academic year)

- High-level overview/ update on proposed actions/ strategies to address issues identified in the last summary report

Faculty (Quality) Summary Reports and/or Minutes attached for information:

Authorised by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____