

Portfolio Moderation Process

Updated 21st June 2019



Key changes:

1. Separation of Portfolio Assessment and Portfolio Moderation Forms.
2. Resubmitted portfolios to be assessed by the tutor using a Portfolio Assessment Form, with full connexional moderation.
3. Process for moderator feedback to tutors and students clarified.

The process for submission of portfolios is described in section 4.1 of the Guide of Portfolios. Please refer to the latest version of this document (currently Issue 1 dated April 2018) as the process is subject to change as we aim to further simplify the tasks expected of students, tutors and moderators.

Note that there are two Submission Deadlines each year, 30th September and 31st March. These deadlines signal the start of moderation. Any portfolio which has not been uploaded to Moodle by the deadline will not be moderated within the current moderation cycle, and hence the student's result will not be released until the end of the next cycle, some eight months later.

This is pertinent information for students who intend to enter the candidating process, as they must be accredited as Local Preachers by February in their candidating year.

Portfolio Assessment Process

In summary, the process for assessment of portfolios is as follows:

Students:

1. Work on their portfolios in collaboration with their tutors who provide formative feedback and support until the portfolio is complete, including all necessary Cover Sheets.
2. When the student and tutor are both satisfied that the portfolio is complete and that it has Met the assessment criteria, the student uploads the portfolio to Moodle. This becomes the definitive copy of the portfolio, and is used for moderation and plagiarism checking¹ purposes. The contents of the portfolio should not be changed after a copy has been uploaded.

Upload can be done at any time, except for a two-month period after each module submission deadline, when the current submissions are being processed. No new portfolios can be uploaded during this time. Portfolios uploaded after a submission deadline will not

¹ It is the intention to introduce background plagiarism checking of all portfolios soon – currently, plagiarism checking is only carried out on an ad hoc basis if the Local Preachers' Office are alerted by a moderator of a potential issue.

be moderated until the next moderation round, and the results will not therefore be released until about two months after that. See note above regarding students who need to meet deadlines for candidating etc.

3. Once the portfolio is uploaded, the student passes a copy of the uploaded portfolio to their tutor for final (summative) assessment. This can be done by any convenient method (email, memory stick, WeTransfer). The tutor must be able to see and review the entire contents of the portfolio, but doesn't need to pass it on to anyone else. The student must provide the final portfolio to their tutor in good time prior to the submission deadline to allow time for them to conduct their summative assessment.

At the very latest, the tutor should receive the portfolio two weeks prior to the deadline.

Tutors:

1. Support and guide their students whilst they are producing their portfolios, providing formative feedback and support until such time as the portfolio is complete.
2. Complete the appropriate boxes and fill in tutor's comments on all Cover Sheets as required, updating these accordingly if the student amends their work in response to formative assessment or constructive comments during the learning.
3. Agree with the student when the portfolio is complete and ready for submission, assisting them with completion of any remaining documentation.
4. When the student has uploaded the finished portfolio, they should receive from the student a copy of the final version, exactly the same as the one they uploaded. At the very latest, this should be two weeks prior to the submission deadline. Tutors are best advised to liaise with their students to ensure this happens in a timely way.
5. The tutor downloads the Portfolio Assessment Form from the Methodist website [here](#) (you will need to scroll to the bottom of the web page to find it). Note that this form no longer has any provision for moderators' comments – these are handled separately (see below).
6. Having completed the Portfolio Assessment Form, the tutor sends it by email to the regional moderator and the Local Preachers Office by midnight on 31 March or 30 September, keeping a copy for their own records.

Note that ***all assessment on the course is carried out by tutors*** – there is no second round of assessment. It is a common misunderstanding that portfolios are re-assessed regionally or centrally after submission. Hence ***no portfolio should be uploaded unless the student and their tutor are both satisfied that it has Met the assessment criteria.***

The Regional Moderator (or nominated Learning & Development Officers) are available to advise tutors on the assessment of their portfolios, and tutors should feel free to contact them for advice and a second opinion on matters of assessment.

Regional Moderation

Moderators are **not** responsible for **assessing** students' work. Their role is to ensure that assessment criteria are being applied consistently across the connexion, ensuring that students are treated fairly and that Local Preachers' Meetings can be confident that the students under their supervision are being assessed to a consistent standard.

The focus of moderation is the assessment undertaken by tutors, not the students' work itself.

The moderation process commences after the submission deadline.

To commence moderation, the moderator requires three items:

- a) The **student's portfolio**. This will be accessed online from the Moodle site. The Local Preachers' office can advise on the process for moderators to access and download the portfolios allocated to them for moderation.
- b) The **Portfolio Assessment Form**. This will be received by email from the tutor. A backup copy should also have been sent to the Local Preachers' office as a backup.
- c) A blank **Portfolio Moderation Form**. Note that moderators' comments no longer appear on the Portfolio Assessment Form. This form can be downloaded from the Methodist Church website, WLP Portfolio page [here](#).

Each region in the Learning Network has a nominated Learning and Development Officer (LDO) who co-ordinates moderation for their region. This person is referred to as the moderator in this document.

Some regions have established a team of regional moderators. This team must be comprised of appropriately qualified and properly trained people. A role description for a member of a regional Moderation Team is available from the Local Preachers' Office. The Moderation Team will be co-ordinated by the Regional Moderator, who will be the primary point of contact with the tutors in their region, and with the Local Preachers' Office.

Workflow for Regional Moderation

Allocation of Portfolios for Moderation

Following the Submission Deadline, the Local Preachers' Office will circulate a list to the Regional Moderators showing the allocation of portfolios to regions for moderation. This is a checking process to ensure that all portfolios are allocated for moderation, and no one has been missed. Normally, moderators will be responsible for portfolios submitted within their region, but it may be necessary to allocate portfolios to different regions for moderation to regulate workload.

If there are any discrepancies in the list of portfolios to be moderated, these should be advised to the Local Preachers' Office as soon as practical, so that they can be sorted out and delays avoided. Note that moderation should commence as soon as practical. Time can be short, especially during the spring moderation cycle, which often includes Easter. It is vital that deadlines are met to ensure no delay in the release of outcomes to students.

Check for Completeness

For each portfolio, the moderator will ensure that all items of the portfolio are present. If items are missing, the Regional Moderator is responsible for contacting the tutor directly to resolve the issue.

Any materials supplied after the Submission Deadline should be copied also to the Local Preachers' office with a short explanation, so that they can be added to the uploaded portfolio.

If substantial parts of the portfolio are missing, it may be necessary to advise the tutor that the portfolio needs to be resubmitted, and will not be moderated until the next cycle, six months later.

Sampling

Regional moderation is done on a sampling basis.

For every portfolio, the moderator will open and check the Portfolio Cover Sheet in Folder 1 for completeness. This Cover Sheet contains a checklist of all the items that should be contained in the portfolio and therefore should give a rapid indication of the completeness of the portfolio.

The moderator will then randomly sample and review **one** item from each of the remaining folders²:

- Folder 2 – one service led by the student
- Folder 3 – one service attended by the student
- Folder 4 – one media item, based on a theological theme.

If the moderator, having reviewed the student's work, agrees in principle with the assessment of the tutor on that work, there is no cause for concern and the moderation process can be considered to have confirmed the tutor's judgement.

Resolving Issues

If the moderator considers that the initial sampling indicates cause for concern, then it will be necessary to enlarge the sample. A further item is randomly selected from each folder and the process is repeated. At all times, the moderator should keep in mind that the purpose is not to assess the student's work, but to ensure that tutors are applying the assessment criteria fairly and upholding appropriate standards.

Among the issues for concern that sometimes arise are:

1. Moderator disagrees with the tutor that the assessment criteria are Met;
2. Incomplete Cover Sheets;
3. Lack of tutor's comments on Cover Sheets, including one-word responses;
4. Unsatisfactory feedback from tutor; and
5. Inadequate theological reflection, especially where this tutor has not commented on this.

If, following a second sampling of the portfolio, the moderator considers that there are issues with the assessment of the portfolio, the moderator should in the first instance contact the tutor who

² Note that this refers to the current four-folder portfolio format. In the previous 11-folder format, one item is reviewed from each of folders 3, 5 and 6.

undertook the assessment. If the tutor can satisfy the moderator that the portfolio assessment has been completed, for example by supplying missing information, the moderator can complete their task. Any additional materials supplied by the tutor in completing the process must also be copied to the Local Preachers' Office so that the official copy of the portfolio can be updated.

Referral to Connexional Moderation

If the moderator cannot reach agreement with the tutor regarding their points of concern, or the tutor is unable to supply information which is considered to be missing, the portfolio will be referred for Connexional Moderation.

The moderator completes the Portfolio Moderation Form and sends it by email to the Local Preachers' office. Refer to the section below on "Providing Feedback".

Connexional Moderation

General Arrangements

Connexional Moderation is undertaken by a team comprising the Regional Moderators (or other nominated representatives) from each of the regions of the Learning Network. Connexional Moderation takes place on a specific day at a convenient venue and all Learning & Development Officers nominated by their region are required to be present.

No moderator will be expected to moderate a portfolio originating from their own region, or with which they have previously been involved as tutor or moderator.

Scope of Connexional Moderation

Connexional Moderation takes place for the following portfolios:

1. One portfolio from each region selected at random by the Local Preachers' Office to provide a control sample.

In these cases, the Portfolio Cover Sheet in Folder 1 will be checked. The moderator will then randomly sample and review **one** item from each of the remaining folders:

- Folder 2 – one service led by the student
- Folder 3 – one service attended by the student
- Folder 4 – one media item, based on a theological theme.

If the moderator considers that the initial sampling indicates cause for concern, then a further item is randomly selected from each folder and the process is repeated.

2. All portfolios referred for a second opinion following regional moderation.

In these cases, the Portfolio Cover Sheet in Folder 1 will be checked. The moderator will then sample and review at least **two** items from each of the remaining folders:

- Folder 2 – services led by the student
- Folder 3 – services attended by the student
- Folder 4 – media items, based on theological themes.

Attention will be initially focussed on items identified by the Regional Moderator as causing concern. The sample will be progressively enlarged until the moderators are satisfied that they have reached a conclusion.

3. All portfolios which have been resubmitted having been re-classified as "NOT YET MET" during a previous moderation process.

Note that responsibility for assessing resubmitted portfolios now lies with the tutor, supported by the Regional Moderator as required. Connexional moderation will include the

whole Portfolio, taking note of the Assessment and Moderation outcomes of the previous submission, which will be provided by the Local Preachers' office.

Arbitration

An arbitrator will be appointed at the Connexional Moderation Meeting. The arbitrator will assist the moderators to reach an agreed conclusion in their moderation. If disagreements persist, the arbitrator's decision will be binding.

If moderators have concerns regarding the quality of moderation in a given region, they will raise these concerns with the arbitrator, who may request that they sample other portfolios from the region and report accordingly.

Re-classification of Portfolio

Where Connexional Moderation results in a Portfolio being reclassified as NOT YET MET, the Local Preachers' Office will co-ordinate feedback to the student and their tutor. The moderator will be included in this correspondence, to enable them to address any issues requiring clarification, pastoral support or continuing development for the tutor and student. It may also be appropriate to include the District Local Preachers' Tutor (or Secretary) in this discussion.

Resubmission of Portfolios

If a portfolio is re-classified, i.e. deemed to have NOT YET MET the assessment criteria, the student may resubmit the portfolio. It should be noted that the whole portfolio should be resubmitted, even if just one or a few items have changed.

Resubmitted portfolios are assessed by the tutor, who will be encouraged to seek support from the Regional Moderator as required. Note that this process has been changed in view of the experience of students and tutors.

Providing Feedback

Note that all moderators' feedback should be filled in on the Portfolio Moderation Form.

Comments for Tutors

Moderation is conducted to encourage consistency in the assessment process, and these comments are an opportunity to provide feedback to tutors. The "Comments for Students" field should be used to record constructive feedback. The opportunity should be used to commend cases where a tutor has provided particularly good input to the student, and also areas for development.

The field should be used to identify areas where the moderator questions the tutor's assessment. These comments should be clear and succinct, and wherever possible give specific examples of the concerns. The intention is to assist the tutor in developing their skills rather than to criticise them.

Tutors may as a result of your comments, have to explain to their student why they will need to resubmit their portfolio, when they thought it had already Met the assessment criteria. Therefore, be SPECIFIC, OBJECTIVE and PRACTICAL in your comments. Make it clear what needs to be changed, noting that someone will need to act on your comments.

Connexional moderators should take account of comments made by Regional Moderators to avoid confusion to the tutors who will need to take account of these comments.

Comments for Students

These should be made sparingly. As a moderator, if you agree with the Tutor's assessment, there is no need to make any comment – the student will not expect any. We are seeking to make it clear to students and tutors that there is no "second assessment" on this course. When moderators provide comments, it reinforces the view that a second assessment is taking place.

Occasionally, a moderator may feel it is necessary to provide explanatory comments to students, especially if the quality of assessment has been called into question. Please use discretion and empathy in providing comments, whilst ensuring they are as specific as necessary to adequately explain the issues.

Note that these comments will be moderated by the Local Preachers' Office before being passed to students.

All Comments

All comment fields should be completed with care and empathy. Inappropriately critical comments or harsh wording can be very discouraging to students and tutors. Whilst we aim to be objective and honest in our feedback, we do so with empathy and grace.

Guidance on Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria for portfolios are described in the Guide to Portfolios, available [here](#) and the Guide for Tutors and Mentors, available [here](#).

Confirmation of Assessment Outcomes

When the moderation process is complete, students whose portfolios have MET the criteria will have their assessment outcomes confirmed via the Moodle system. Tutors are advised prior to this that their students will be receiving their confirmed results.

Students whose portfolio assessment has been changed through moderation – i.e. are judged to have NOT YET MET the criteria, will be advised by email by the Local Preachers' Office, making use of the feedback provided by moderators on the Portfolio Moderation Form. This correspondence will be copied to the Regional Moderator to enable them to support the tutor and student through the resubmission process.

Plagiarism

If plagiarism is suspected at any stage during the moderation process, these concerns should be communicated to the Local Preachers' Office at the earliest opportunity. We now have access to online plagiarism checking software, but the process of checking takes time, and delays to moderation should be avoided.

If at any stage during moderation, evidence of significant plagiarism is found, the submission will be returned ungraded to the student for rewriting and resubmission.