

Small group moderation

The small group moderation process is designed to protect the interests of students by helping to minimise the potential effects of anomalies deriving from the statistical moderation of the numerical school assessments for small groups of students. Approval for a school or other provider to offer a subject/course is conditional upon implementation of all of the moderation procedures of the Curriculum Council including small group moderation.

Participation in small group moderation is compulsory for all final year TEE subjects/WACE courses with a projected enrolment of less than 10 students sitting the external assessment. In the case of Languages (LOTE) subjects, this number excludes background speakers. It is also advisable to consider participation in small group moderation when groups are between 10 and 15 students, to allow for possible reductions in enrolments that may result in less than 10 students sitting the external assessment.

The small group moderation process requires a school or other provider with a small group to combine its numerical school assessments with those from another school(s) offering the same subject/course. The purpose of combining numerical school assessments is to increase the total group size to minimise potential statistical anomalies associated with the statistical moderation of small groups.

Partnerships

It is the responsibility of a school with a small group in a final year subject/course to initiate the formation of a small group moderation partnership and to ensure that this partnership operates effectively.

- Schools may form partnerships with one or more schools of their own choosing. Partnerships involving more than three schools are not advisable. In new WACE courses, where possible, schools should form their partnership with a school/s in the same consensus moderation group.
- Past experience has demonstrated that the most effective strategy is for a school with a small group of students to form a partnership with a school with a large group of students.
- Partnerships should be formed early in the year to make it possible for partner schools to organise sufficient common assessment tasks to enable the valid matching of numerical school assessments. Where possible, partnerships should be formed late in the previous year if projected enrolments in a subject/course indicate that the number of Curriculum Council examination candidates is likely to be less than 10.

Schools may either continue with partnerships established in the previous year or establish new partnerships with different schools. In both cases, partnership details must be confirmed with the partner school(s) before details are provided to the Council.

Small group moderation is most effective when the teacher responsible for the subject/course negotiates and maintains a partnership. However, if advice is required, teachers should contact the relevant moderation officer who may be able to assist in the process.

Combining numerical school assessments

Schools with small groups combine (match) their numerical school assessments with those from their partner school(s). The matching process requires assessment programs and strategies to be coordinated between the partner schools.

Partnership options

A school (particularly a school with large numbers in a subject/course) may wish to participate in a partnership but not want their numerical school assessments moderated with the partner school(s). Schools are given the following options for each subject/course.

Options available	Example of use
Option A: The school is to be statistically moderated in partnership with its partners, regardless of the outcome of any post hoc analysis carried out by the Curriculum Council.	This option may used by small groups that are sure (as a result of planning common teaching and assessment programs, carrying out extensive cross-marking and holding numerous consensus meetings) that they have assessed on the same scale as their partner.
Option B: The school is to be statistically moderated without its partners.	This option is often used by large schools/groups that wish to help a smaller group by offering them a partnership, but want to assure their own students that the partnership will have no effect on their marks.
Option C: The school's small group moderation partnership is to be reviewed by the Curriculum Council and adjusted if necessary in the interest of fairness.	This option is the status quo and may result in a partnership being split, partially split or unaltered. This usually provides the safest option for small groups that are not completely confident that they have achieved comparability of assessment scales with their partner.

Schools with less than 10 students enrolled for the Curriculum Council examination (as at the last date for changes to TEE/WACE enrolments) should choose either option A or C. Option B cannot be selected where the group size is less than 10 Curriculum Council examination candidates as this has the potential to reduce the accuracy of statistical moderation. If Option B is chosen in error, the Council will automatically change this to option C.

Option C is the default option in the event that the small group moderation partnerships options and declaration form is not signed by the principal and returned to the Curriculum Council by the specified date.

The options will be exercised separately for each school-subject/course group and may differ from subject to subject or course to course within a school. Selection of the option is made unilaterally by each school (i.e. there does not have to be agreement between partner schools).