

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - Certificate of Higher Education (Science, Social Studies, Business & Management)

Dear Dr Kitchen,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School.

1. **[2] your indication that "it will be important to monitor closely the achievements of students as they progress into full-time departments to ensure that standards are comparable in each context";**
2. **[3] your detailed observations and recommendation on marking at the progression threshold;**
3. **[4] your reiterated indications regarding your preference to receive "moderators' reports and summary mark sheets for individual modules in advance of the date of the Exam Board".**

The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Kitchen for his positive comments on the new Pathway to Social Science programme, and for recognising the careful and effective design of the programme which will support mature and non-traditional students' learning.

We fully recognise the need to monitor closely the achievements of students as they progress from the Pathway to full-time study in the School of Social Sciences (SOCSI). The role of the Co-ordinating Lecturer for Social Studies in LEARN will be to continue to offer support to progressing students, and to ensure that standards are comparable in each context.

We are pleased to note that the external examiner considered that there was a good range of marks obtained by students on Pathway modules. The progression threshold of 50% has been set by SOCSI admissions tutors in order to indicate the strength of potential students to SOCSI. We will take steps to advise markers to attempt to avoid giving a mark of exactly 50 in order to indicate, as clearly as possible, the extent to which a student has the ability to study at degree level.

The external examiner has stated a preference to receive copies of moderators' reports and summary mark sheets for individual modules in advance of the day of the exam board. Whilst this may not be possible, we would be able to provide samples of student work that span the mark range for individual modules in advance of the meeting."

Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

In order to meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on Registry web pages and will be available publically.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Mrs Jill Bedford
Director of Registry and Academic Services