

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - BSc in Clinical Practice and the BSc in Community Practice

Dear Mr Ormrod,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the School of Healthcare Sciences 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. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

"The Programme Manager is grateful to the External Examiner for his comments and welcomed the opportunity to discuss them when he attended examination board on July 30th 2013. His comments relating to the moderation process and provision of scripts for external examiners were also discussed at the examination board and an expansion on that discussion is provided below.

Specific issues with NR3184 were also discussed with the module team and further explanation is also offered below.

1. [3 (2nd and 3rd paras)] the External examiner's detailed observations regarding the method of assessment for a named element of the programme

The module team recognised that some students had, as the External Examiner suggested, listed ideas in some of their answers and this was reflected in the mark awarded to those students. Prior to the classroom test students are offered an opportunity to undertake a preparation test in order to prepare them to be able to manage their time within the summative classroom test. Some students are able to time manage effectively and this is seen in the responses and the marks they achieved. However, advice is given to students that where they have not managed their time effectively, it is advantageous to offer a list of information.

The planning team developing this programme incorporated the views of users of palliative care services and past students, together with service managers. All were clear that the assessment should not demonstrate the ability to write an academic essay but should focus on the skills of assessment, care planning and delivery of patient/family focussed care. The short answer classroom test focussed on a patient scenario seeks to provide evidence of thinking in practice that meets these objectives. The pass mark is 40% and contributes to 80% of the total module mark. Specific knowledge is tested by the EMCQ format and focuses on the core knowledge required to support patients at the end of life e.g. dose conversions, analgesic ladder, advance care planning. The pass mark for this element is 80% and it forms 20% of the total mark.

Student evaluations (currently of over 200 students) consistently acknowledge the clinical value of the module and how the assessment strategy supports this clinically-focussed approach.

2. [3, final para] detailed observations and suggestion regarding the "moderation of work"

The moderation process is one used across the School and has been developed over a number of years. Initially there was an 'independent' colleague who was not part of the module team who acted as moderator, much in the same way as an external examiner acts. On evaluation of the moderation process it was agreed that this was duplication of the external's role and that purpose of moderation was to ensure that module team members were in agreement on the performance of students in line with the learning outcomes and marking rubric. Therefore, it was agreed that moderation would be internal to the module. In BSc Clinical Practice this may in practice mean that there are only 2 members of the team who moderate each other; however, in larger modules the team consists of a greater number of markers and moderators.

3. [5] the External Examiner's comments regarding "the difficulties inherent in moderating scripts that have been scanned and then delivered as a pdf file"

The School has identified this issue and it is something that the School is working on to ensure in the future external examiners will have access to students' work via Grademark. This will allow external examiners the same access to work as internal markers. The issue of annotation over students' work has been recognised and markers are urged to keep comments on Grademark to the margins of the work and highlight the area that the comment is relevant to.

Again we would like to thank the External Examiner for all the comments he has made with regard to modules within this programme and the team has welcomed the opportunity to have discussions on the issues raised above and in other module reports. We hope the above addresses the External Examiner's concerns but if he has any further queries or comments, he is most welcome to contact the Programme Manager or any other member of the programme team, at any time."

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;**
- b. **[1] in particular, your report of "evidence of collaboration with the local health community to ensure fitness for practice and purpose both regards patient/client need and PSRB requirements".**

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