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Sent by email to charles.laughton@nottingham.ac.uk 30 November 2016

Dear Dr Laughton,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2015–2016

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MPharm (Medicinal Chemistry).

Your Report has been considered by the School 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.

Issue Highlighted

Indication that there could be better documentation of how moderation and consistency checks on marking have been done and related detailed comments on the marking sheet used for assessment of projects (PH4116).

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

A lot of work has been done on the programme to ensure that assessment scripts are clearly annotated with markers comments (a set of standard abbreviations is used) and the allocation of marks is clear. We would expect this would extend to second marking / moderation. The officers of the exam boards will continue to work with academic staff to ensure that school guidelines are followed consistently by all assessors. The use of peer assessment is expanding at Cardiff University, including

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central support for this type of assessment. These improvements, and increasing experience of staff should improve our application of peer assessment.

The project marking schemes are a perennial challenge for the School. The module team for PH4116 has reviewed and changed the marking schemes for next academic year.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. continuous development in the consistency of exam script annotation, marking and feedback;
3. the Coursework component that provides “a wonderful “joined up” experience for the students in theory, practice, group work and self-directed study”;
4. Group Presentations in PH3101, in which students produced high quality teaching aids and engaged in an element of peer assessment;
5. an innovative, prior release of questions, format for the exam component of PH3101, that compares well with conventional written examinations and received positive student feedback.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we thank you for your continued support of the programme.

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 the University website and will be available to all students and staff.

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.

Yours sincerely,



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