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Sent by email to c.m.holdsworth@keele.ac.uk

30 March 2017

Dear Professor Holdsworth,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MSc/Diploma in Social Science Research Methods.

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 point you had raised.

Issue Highlighted

Remaining tension between the emphasis on methods rather than more substantive topics and recommendation that this be kept under continual review.

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

The School has confirmed that it will continue to monitor the balance between methodological and substantive topics across pathways as the programme continues to evolve.

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The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. clear processes for second marking;
3. dedication of staff and standards achieved by students;
4. detailed feedback provided to students.

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

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

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,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar