

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - BA in French (Single & Joint Hons), BScEcon in European Union Studies, LLB in Law & French (French)

Dear Dr Cruickshank,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of European Languages, Translation and Politics 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. **[1.2] your observations on the “number of first class outcomes and related indication that “perhaps a fuller range of marks could be used”;**
2. **[1.3, 2.4 and 2.12] your request for sight of “coursework of borderline cases” and indication that “in future the reasoning behind the final mark could be made more explicit”;**
3. **[2.28] your detailed comments on the consideration of extenuating circumstances reported orally and on the “status of marking provision for students benefiting from Educational Support/Special Provisions”.**

The following response to these and other issues contained in your report has been provided by the School.

“The French Department welcomes all of the comments from Dr Ruth Cruickshank. We were particularly pleased to note the external examiner's positive indications regarding our programme structure, our wide range of modules, the rigour of our teaching and assessment as well as our students' ‘impressive linguistic and intellectual achievements across content and language courses (written and oral)’. We also welcome the externals' comments on the French department's responsiveness to earlier recommendations (by providing clear schedules of exam dates, marking criteria, coursekits and deadlines as well as frequent updates).

In the context of comments about student achievement and marking/ moderation processes that are are ‘painstaking and equitable’, the external has suggested that a fuller range of marks might be used and that the reasoning behind the final mark might be made more explicit. The French department has over recent years endeavoured to use a fuller range of marks and we will continue to work in this direction. The department has already made enormous progress on its first and second marking procedures, particularly through the introduction of marksheets, and we will continue to seek, despite the tight marking turnaround times imposed by centralised examination timetabling, to work towards clarifying our final assessment criteria. Dr Cruickshank's suggestion that coursework in borderline cases should be made available to examiners just ahead of the final board will be acted upon in 2013-14. The external's comment on the standardisation of rubrics has given rise to a peer review system of double-checking all exam scripts before they are seen by the external. The issues raised regarding extenuating circumstances and special provision will be taken up with the School's Student cases/ Extenuating Circumstances officer who may wish to bring this matter to the attention of the central University.”

Positive Comments

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

- a. **[1.1, 1.2 and 1.3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment;**
- b. **[1.4] your positive comments on the supporting documentation provided to you.**

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