



Academic & Student Support Services
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Sent by email to r.m.gillett@qmul.ac.uk

26 September 2016

Dear Dr Gillett,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BA in German.

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.

Issues Highlighted

1. Your observation of rising average marks year-on-year and indication that this should be carefully monitored to ensure that grade inflation is kept in check.
2. Your request for access to all assessment material on the day.
3. Your suggested changes to the examination for "ex-beginners".
4. Your suggestion that native speakers be excluded from oral examinations.

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

1. The School will try to monitor this taking into account that it will always try to raise the standard. The School has raised the entrance requirements which accounted for better students.

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2. It is School policy that the External Examiner has access to a certain percentage of the degree, including borderlines, fails and firsts. The Examination Officer is happy to address any queries on the day. The School will look into the possibility for you to have access to Learning Central/Turnitin for coursework marked by Grademark.
3. The marking schemes follow a communicative approach to language teaching, consequently, grammar mistakes are not marked as rigorously as other approaches would warrant. The School will investigate the issue of high marks for incorrect German and endeavour to avoid this in the future. The School will also adjust the examination paper with a view to address this issue.
4. Although an excellent suggestion, this would have to be adopted school wide, which is problematic as the School does not have enough students who are native speakers to warrant extra classes nor the resources to exempt them from language classes. If the School had sufficient numbers consideration would be given to creating a new module.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process
2. Your support of procedural changes allowing you to moderate material on site;
3. Your commendation of opportunities on one module for students to prepare examination answers in advance, leading to a wide range of material being used in their answers and very high standards being achieved.

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,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar

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