

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MPharm (Medicinal Chemistry)**

Dear Professor Searcey,

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 Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical 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.

1. **[3 and 7] the suggested consideration of how External Examiners might in future interact with students;**
2. **[4 and 8.8] your detailed comments regarding the annotation of marked scripts / availability of evidence where marks have been lost;**
3. **[4] your detailed observations on the "differences in format used by every student" in their research projects and related suggestion.**

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

*"1. From this year, with final year viva voce examinations no longer in operation, the school is investigating new ways to allow constructive access of external examiners to our students. In addition to satisfying Cardiff Academic Regulations, this is also a requirement for successful professional accreditation in 2015. Therefore we intend to implement and trial new procedures during the course of the coming academic year.*

*2. All staff involved in marking assessments have been strongly advised to annotate exam papers as a matter of good practice and to aid and assist the external examining process. These important procedures will be reinforced within the school this year as part of our review of all exams and assessment procedures prompted by the [University-wide] Assessment Matters project. However, we appreciate that the examiner identifies a specific module he encountered difficulties with, particularly with borderline scripts. The school recognizes this comment as critical to comply with Academic Regulations (7.2 Reliability and Consistency of Marking, p88, AcadRegs. 2013-14) and will address this concern with the module team.*

*3. We note the external examiner's comment concerning difference of format in the research project. In the recent past, attempts to standard projects, and whilst improvements have been made, it is ultimately difficult (impossible?) to achieve perfect standardization due to the highly individual nature (even within a research discipline area) of the large number of projects we run each year. The comments are noted, and will be passed to the module team."*

Your reported concern [at 3] regarding identity checks at examination venues is noted and shared with the School. Thank you for drawing the matter to the University's attention. The protocols already in place for the checking of candidate identity at examinations and their consistent application will re-emphasised in the training of invigilators. I have also asked the Head of the Assessment and Graduation team in Registry to explore with the School further means to reassure the probity of the examination process.

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. **[6 and 7] your commendations, including those for the "second year laboratory course", for "the structure of the final year", for the "buddy system" and for the medicinal chemistry group.**

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