

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - Combined Professional Doctorate in Nursing (taught element)

Dear Dr Cluett,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies 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] your detailed observations and comments on the order in which modules may be taken by students.

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

"The School would like to thank Dr Cluett for her comments and the input she has had over the past 3 years.

With regard to the issue raised in this instance, the flexibility of the professional doctorate programme is crucial given the many demands placed on senior practitioners in the workplace. However, it is recognised that the current assessment for the research module under discussion is not suitable for students who are only in their first year. We cannot change the running order as there will always be first and second years on any given module. Also, because of low numbers it is neither financially feasible nor best use of limited appropriately qualified staff time to run all modules every year. Therefore, we are in the process of changing the module assessment, prior to its next occurrence in April 2015, to reflect the mixed abilities of the students.

It is envisaged that the assignment will change from the current protocol based on the students' research question, to that of an essay which asks them to critically examine the ethical governance implications of their study (thus allowing them to write from a more conceptual perspective). This amendment will be submitted for consideration by the appropriate School quality processes over the next few months.

We hope that this change will be more productive in enhancing research skills for the students and will no longer disadvantage first year students."

Positive Comments

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

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[3, 4 and 6] the External Examiner's commendation of the programme team's "internal quality assurance process", of the responsiveness of the programme to external examiner recommendations and staff and student evaluation, and of the administrative support for the programme.**

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