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Sent by email

05 January 2018

Dear Dr Oxley,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Reports 2016–2017

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Reports for the MSc in Wireless and Microwave Communication Engineering / MSc in Communication Technology and Entrepreneurship.

Your Reports have 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. Student concerns about group project marking.
2. Potential to increase the variety of assessment methods highlighted in student feedback.
3. The dissertation marking scheme matrix may advantage students who do not pay attention to the 'detail' of their presentation.

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

1. This concern relates to module BST194, The New Venture Plan. This Entrepreneurship-focussed module is intentionally group based and involves students collaborating to develop a business plan. At the time of the part-1 Examining Board, students were naturally concerned with the group-based

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assessment. The School has now updated module introduction, specifically ENT614 Research Study documentation, to provide awareness of this assessment method, together with its advantages and disadvantages. This is hoped to reduce concern in future cohorts.

2. The School agree that some of the modules identified could benefit from inclusion of practical based coursework, and have a plan to change this over coming years. For instance, ENT713 will be modified to include a 30% coursework element in Academic Year 2018-2019. It should be remembered however that some other modules in the programme are 100% coursework, so the School must also ensure a balance such that students are not overburdened with coursework during the Semester.
3. The Programme Team thanks you for these comments, which are valid. The marking matrix has been reviewed, and although there is opportunity for an assessor to penalise under the 'Presentation' criteria, this criteria covers results and presented arguments as well as written clarity. A proposal to propose to split 'Presentation' into two categories: 'Technical Presentation' and 'Written Presentation', will be considered further.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. student appreciation the Programme, of the nature and timeliness of feedback and of modules relating to RF design and non-linear analysis, in particular;
3. your commendation of the format of the assignment mark sheet for ENT799 which was very clear and useful for student feedback, and which could be the basis for a general mark/feedback proforma for all assignments;
4. information provided to support the Examining Board;
5. the dedication of the course team enthusiastically delivering a world leading MSc even when student numbers were low.

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