

Academic & Student Support Services  
Academic Registrar  
Simon Wright LLB  
*Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr*  
*Cofrestrydd Academaidd*  
*Simon Wright LLB*



Sent by email to [h.buffery@ucc.ie](mailto:h.buffery@ucc.ie)

17 July 2015

Dear Dr Buffery,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2014 – 2015**

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BA in Spanish (Spanish language, Catalan language, related Cultural Modules).

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.

**Issue(s) Highlighted:**

1. The shift to 20+20 credit language modules leading to the reduction in coverage of other areas of Hispanic Studies which may have adverse effects in final year dissertations;
2. Provision of paperwork (in particular minutes of previous meetings) before the examination boards;
3. The request to see examples of all forms of assessment;
4. Ensuring that module spreadsheets and statistics are made available to external examiners when they arrive, and also that paperwork relating to the final exam boards (including draft runs of marks) be seen by subject boards on the previous day in order to help to anticipate problems or potential errors

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

1. The Hispanic Studies Programme Team shares the concern that the recent increase in the number of credits allocated to Spanish language tuition impacts negatively on students' exposure to other core areas of the discipline, namely the culture and history of the Spanish-speaking world as taught in a range of research-led content modules. The School of Modern Languages is currently revising the allocation of credits in all programmes, which the Programme Team very much hope will lead to a healthier balance between the two types of tuition. Ultimately the concern raised affects the academic standard of the BA Hispanic Studies offered by Cardiff University, which the Programme Team are determined to maintain at a high level.
2. The Examining Board Reports are generally produced on the day before the corresponding board, which is a consequence of the tight deadline for the entry of

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 ODE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

*Prifysgol Caerdydd*  
*Tŷ McKenzie*  
*30-36 Heol Casnewydd*  
*Caerdydd CF24 ODE*  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

marks and the knock-on effect the modular boards have on award and progression boards. As things stand, these reports could therefore be made available to the External Examiner on the day before the board concerned, but probably not earlier. Unless this situation changes next year, you will be provided with a hardcopy of exam board reports as requested. You will also be sent this year's minutes prior to the examining boards.

3. In last year's response Hispanic Studies committed to making available relevant samples of assessed coursework to you prior to the exam boards. However, the fact that all assessed coursework had been returned to students with no copies being held by staff made this impossible. To ensure that next year the Programme Team is able to give you access to a sample of all types of assessment carried out, practice regarding the return of assessed coursework will be revisited.
4. The Programme Team will enquire with Professional Support staff whether it is possible to produce draft runs of marks for final year students prior to the corresponding module boards. If the reply is affirmative, these reports will be made available to you at the modular board, at the latest.

**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 report of enhanced moderation practice;
3. your particular commendation of innovative practice in the language learning modules and of the quality of teaching and learning in general

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme 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 Student Intranet 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

Cardiff University  
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