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Sent by email to [jdanely@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jdanely@brookes.ac.uk)

**06 February 2020**

Dear Dr Danely,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19**

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for all Japanese modules on Undergraduate programmes.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. This program is very well structured, providing a strong foundation in the first years, followed by opportunities to specialize in the last years.
3. The variety of coursework and the more balanced weighting encourages students to develop a range of skills.
4. Memory and Symbols was a welcome addition to the program, as it clearly demonstrates the strength of research-led teaching.
5. The variety of assessments seemed to bring out the best in each student, and some of the work was outstanding.



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## Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:

1. **Programme Structure:** *Exams may have to be adjusted slightly to account for the 1.5 hr. time limit.*

Since the 2018-19 academic year, the Year 2 language module (ML5280 Intermediate Japanese) has employed a 1.5 hr exam due to the change in the weighting (there has been no change in the exam time for the other modules). The module leader of ML5280 will re-consider the structure of the examination, including the length of texts and the number of questions.

2. **Programme Structure:** *It is impressive that Japanese has been able to continue to deliver their programme and achieve such high standards when vital staff have left or taken extended leave. This has put this excellent program in a very difficult position, and I think it is essential that more stability is brought to program with more full-time staff, ideally permanent.*

We appreciate your support in dealing with the staffing issue. Two lecturers, a full-time lecturer for language modules and a lecturer to cover maternity leave, joined the team in September 2019. This has enabled us to run the programme more smoothly with a long-range perspective.

3. **Academic Standards:** *I encourage the use of the full range of marks within reasonable limits.*

The marks were finalised through the careful moderation process, and we believe that the final marks were appropriate and reasonable. However, we are going to reflect on this point at our programme meeting to improve our practices.

4. **The Assessment Process:** *In the free written feedback there was less consistency.*

At the next programme meeting, we are going to discuss how we could improve our feedback practices. In addition, the Japanese exam officer will promote the staff's awareness on this point through emails throughout the marking processes and encourage moderators to check written feedback too.

5. **The Assessment Process:** *Some students appear to be doing poorly on essays not due to knowledge and argument but rather organization and mechanics (i.e. citations and referencing).*

We have stressed the importance to follow the appropriate citation and referencing styles, but we have also recognised that some students need more support. In order to promote the students' awareness further, we continuously encourage them to utilise the service the university provides

to students (e.g., [https://xerte.cardiff.ac.uk/play\\_4216](https://xerte.cardiff.ac.uk/play_4216)) in class, and add this type of information to the coursekit and on Learning Central.]

6. **Year on Year comments:** *I encourage the use of constructive comments in student feedback for significant assessments such as the year-abroad essay and year 4 essays. There has been improvement in this area and it would be enhanced if attention was taken to apply best practices uniformly across modules/semesters.*

As mentioned previously, we are going to discuss our feedback practices at our programme meeting.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and 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's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar