

Sent by email to nick.toms@pms.ac.uk

19 October 2015

Dear Dr Toms,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BSc in Medical Pharmacology (modules as required)/ BSc in Pharmacology (Intercalated).

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. your report that Medical Pharmacology students, undertaking the Clinical Anatomy module, had cited being relatively unfamiliar with the module's summative assessment format and had highlighted a need for enhanced anatomy summative assessment format information and/or a formative test opportunity (e.g. formative Spotter test);
2. your indication that Intercalated Pharmacology students suggested that some additional laboratory skill training would be beneficial prior to their project commencing;
3. your observation that that intercalating medical students that follow laboratory-based programmes (including Intercalated Pharmacology), appear to have won the Dean's Intercalated Degree prize relatively less frequently over recent years.

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

1. The Clinical Anatomy module (BI3328) was new this year and inevitably came with some teething issues. After consultation (before the Exam Board) with those running the module (from the School of Biosciences) it was decided that the module should be run by MEDIC from next year. This will give the Medical Pharmacology staff much closer control of day-to-day issues and provide a more streamlined approach to module delivery. It was also agreed that such formative and summative assessments (described above) should be included as a priority.

In addition, it has also been decided that the point of delivery of this module (taken by those with aspirations of obtaining Graduate Entry to Medicine) is inappropriate. Starting from the next academic year, both final year and second year students will take the module with a view to it being solely delivered in year two in subsequent years in future.

2. This issue will be raised at the Medical Pharmacology Annual Teaching Review meeting. Discussions will also occur with the Director of Intercolated Degree Programme with a view to providing such teaching to all intercalating students.
3. This issue provoked considerable discussion at the Exam Board. It was agreed that a method of awarding the Intercolated Dean's prize that better accounts for the variation in highest final degree mark awarded between BSc routes should be considered. Options might include awarding a Dean's Prize for each intercalated route, or using a panel of Senior Academic Colleagues to viva the top scoring student from each BSc route to agree the overall winner.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we 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 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

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 ODE
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189
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*

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 ODE
Tel *Ffôn* I +44(0)29 2087 9189
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