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Sent by email to a.dilley@bsms.ac.uk

20 July 2017

Dear Dr Dilley,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BDS(Hons) in Dentistry (Primary BDS Part 1 - Anatomy).

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.

Issues Highlighted

1. The use made of standard setting.
2. Your observations on the use made of examination essays and related student outcomes.
3. Your detailed observations on drawing and labelling questions.

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

1. Your positive comments on the introduction of standard setting this year have been noted and the programme team are going to continue with this into the future. The School of Dentistry have made a specific appointment of a Psychometrition to help analyse the data from standard setting which will be used to inform the question setters about the performance of the questions.

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Due to the short time period between the completion of marking and the exam board this will for the first few years be done on a retrospective basis. Over time, however, this will change as all the questions within the bank will have data associated with them. A robust and appropriate method for standard setting has been determined by the School of Dentistry.

2. The programme team has concluded that it is clear that examination essays are not compatible with standard setting, particularly as the marking of them is criteria-based and thus subjective to a degree. Whilst they do have some merit, the programme team reluctantly is minded to remove them from future assessments.
3. The programme team has noted your comments on the detailed nature of examination questions. A wide array of short answer question formats is employed and the programme team is constantly modifying them to ensure that they continue to challenge students. The programme team believes that some basic drawing is a useful skill to continue with.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. exceptional range of teaching and assessment methods including standard setting of exam papers;
2. top students performing exceedingly well and demonstrating exceptional knowledge;

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

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