

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



14 October 2015

**Sent by email to SOCSI Undergraduate External Examiners – Summer 2015:**

[a.bradbury@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:a.bradbury@ioe.ac.uk), [s.condor@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:s.condor@lboro.ac.uk),  
[vanessa.may@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:vanessa.may@manchester.ac.uk), [hso1@le.ac.uk](mailto:hso1@le.ac.uk), [m.powell@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.powell@bham.ac.uk),  
[scr2@aber.ac.uk](mailto:scr2@aber.ac.uk), [E.Uprichard@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:E.Uprichard@warwick.ac.uk), [e.l.wincup@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.l.wincup@leeds.ac.uk)

Dear Dr Bradbury, Professor Condor, Dr May, Professor O'Connor, Professor Powell, Dr Riley, Dr Uprichard and Dr Wincup,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Reports 2014 – 2015 for Undergraduate Programmes in SOCSI**

I am writing further to the receipt of External Examiner Reports for the Undergraduate Programmes in the Cardiff School of Social Sciences.

The 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 raised.

The School has provided the attached composite response to issues raised by its External Examiners in 2014-2015. The School and University are pleased to note the many positive comments contained in the Reports and summarised by the School.

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, the External Examiner Annual Reports and this Institutional Response, including the attachment 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.

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)

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

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar

Attachment

## Response to external examiners (undergraduate programmes), School of Social Sciences, 2015

Professor Chris Taylor, Chair of the Undergraduate Examination Board  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

We are grateful to all of our external examiners for their constructive comments, and for their help throughout the assessment process.

We are pleased to note the many positive comments received from all our undergraduate external examiners. They unanimously endorse the standards set and the performance of the students. They are also very positive about the conduct of the exam boards and the work of the office in processing the assessment and examining process. Indeed, two of the eight external examiners raised no concerns whatsoever (Condor (Psychology), Riley (Psychology)).

Several of the external examiners raise issues that we shall wish to address. It is our annual practice to convene a post-exam board of studies meeting very shortly after the summer assessment period, and several of the issues raised here have already been fed back to the Board of Studies. All substantive issues discussed below will be referred to the Board of Studies. This response has been prepared by the Chair of the Examination Board.

This is a composite response, based on all the externals' reports, rather than a series of individual responses. In this manner, all the external examiners can have access to each other's comments and the School's response. The following table summarises where external examiners have raised particular concerns under each of the following headings. This report then goes on to respond to any concerns raised under the relevant headings.

1	Programme Structure	Powell
2	Academic Standards	Powell; Wincup; Uprichard
3	The Assessment Process	Powell; May; Bradbury; O'Connor; Wincup; Uprichard
4	Year-On-Year Comments	Powell; May; Uprichard
5	Preparation/Induction Activity (for new External Examiners only)	
6	Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement	Powell; Uprichard
7	Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)	
8	Annual Report Checklist	

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### Issue(s) Raised by Martin Powell (Social Policy)

1. Although some progress has been made, I would still like to see a more common approach to two issues across modules. First, the degree of choice of both examination and coursework questions (choose x from y) varies significantly. Second, 'effort' in the form of a 'x word assignment' or a 'y hour examination' comprising a different percentage of contribution towards total marks varies.
2. In my view, basic descriptive statistics (eg means/ medians/ standard deviations and coefficients of variation) that allow a comparison between modules should be available to the Examination Board
3. I still have some concerns over marking being perhaps a little over generous at the 'bottom end', especially for truncated/ note form examination answers, and some coursework material with high similarity scores (Turnitin) was perhaps marked too generously
4. Where there is a significant difference I would like to see a clear explanation of how the difference was resolved (ie not simply splitting the difference), While this was clear in some courses, in others I did not receive any 'moderation' material.
5. In my view, any penalties for over-length or lateness need to be clearly on reading lists (assessment section) and perhaps on the electronic system at the point of submission (perhaps 'I understand....') rather than only being buried away in the Handbook (which may not always be consulted for every assessment).
6. The amount of 'within text' feedback varied between courses. I realise that this is very time consuming, but suggest that particular attention should be paid to 'fails' and to students with a high 2i (what do they need to do to push their future marks into a 1st?).
7. With the move towards a more mechanical approach to marks and the reduction of discretion by Examination Boards, you may wish to consider if the formal 'full meeting' Board over two days remains a good use of people's time. You could perhaps consider a smaller Board; or use External Examiner's time more in discussion rather than simply noting a long list of marks that require no discussion/ action.
8. I am sorry that I feel I have to repeat my concerns over the current staffing levels for the social policy modules. The small team covers many courses, and appears to be very hard-pressed. While they have done an excellent job, I am not sure that such workload is sustainable for a leading research-intensive University.

### **Positive comments:**

- I remain impressed to see a variety of assessment methods, including a good balance between coursework and examinations. Internal markers clearly put a great deal of effort into the process, and the practice of having two markers for pieces of work is to be commended
- I am impressed by the 'Institutional Report' which shows that the University takes External Examiners' comments seriously, and deals with them in a transparent fashion

### **Issue(s) Raised by Vanessa May (Sociology)**

1. I did not receive paperwork regarding the moderation process (though I understood during the exam board that other examiners had received this). The response to external examiners from the Faculty indicates that paperwork is only filled in when there is a discrepancy in marks between first and second marker. But given that the role of external examiners is to audit whether processes and procedures are correctly being followed, then there should be some paper trail available.
2. The style and quantity of feedback differs between modules. Some markers provided comments in relation to marking criteria, others did not. Some markers provided specific comments on each essay and provided advice on how to improve, while others provided fairly generic comments with little annotation of essays.
3. I would like to suggest that the School consider the use of the 'rubric' function on Grademark.
4. It was clear that some markers were trying to use a wider range of marks at the upper end of the scale, with some modules marking essays and exams into the mid-80s. However, there were still modules where the highest marks were 75 and 78. The use of a fuller range of marks might help in clearly distinguishing first class students in their overall degree classification.
5. In my report two years ago I noted how good the essay feedback sheet was, providing a section on things to commend and things to improve in future work, as well as an indication of how well the student did on the key assessment criteria. Some markers have kept up this good practice even after the transfer to online marking, but I fear that it is at risk of being lost. I would therefore reiterate my suggestion from last year that the teaching and learning committee consider ways in which aspects of the old feedback form could be incorporated within Grademark (e.g. by utilizing the rubric function as suggested above) and an agreement that all staff include in their general essay comments sections highlighting things to commend and things to improve would also be helpful.
6. This year, the issues I have raised in terms of procedure and assessment are mainly to do with marking, most importantly in relation to the full set of paperwork related to the moderation process. One of the assessments was marked offline, for good reason, but this meant that I did not get to see any of the feedback that students had received and was consequently looking at the coursework 'blind' as it were.
7. I am happy to note that Blackboard is being used more consistently, but due to module handbooks varying widely in content, it is still difficult for external examiners to piece together what a module consists of. For one module, I had to download three separate documents in order to find out all that I needed to know about a module, including lecture and seminar topics, reading lists and assessment information.

### **Positive comments:**

- As in previous years, I was particularly impressed by the fact that all of the modules required students to apply sociological thinking to 'real world' issues of their own choice.
- This is my third year as external examiner for Cardiff University, and once again I can note that module convenors put a lot of work into keeping their modules fresh. Two of the modules I examined had undergone quite significant changes in content and assessment since last year, while the third module was a new one. In discussions with staff it was clear that members of staff are continuously striving to improve their modules so as to ensure that pedagogical and academic aims and objectives are met. This is a sign of active engagement with

teaching. All modules also engaged with current social developments, most notably developments in ICT and social media.

- This is all testament to the creative ways in which staff at Cardiff University approach the delivery of their teaching
- Cultural Sociology: Excellent use of Blackboard, containing lecture notes and several readings in PDF form per lecture. The main assessment, which consisted of a small research project, also worked very well and produced some interesting essays that allowed students to apply sociological theories to their everyday experiences. The essay writing guidance was detailed and gave students step-by-step and exhaustive advice on how to go about conducting and writing up their research project. This year I also noted that the lectures were centred around particular 'real life' questions that the theories were aimed to answer. In lectures, students are also asked to apply these theories to their everyday lives – this is good both in terms of getting students to apply their sociological imagination, but also in preparation for the assessment. Thus the lectures are able to demonstrate the relevance of sociology to students' everyday lives, and I appreciate how much work has gone into rethinking the lectures in this way.
- Digital Sociology: The logic of the module works well, starting out with theories of information/digital society, followed by digital methods of research. The module handout was well structured and gave students all the key information in one place. Each lecture was structured around a key question, sparking students' interest in the topic. The assessments were well structured: first a literature review, then setting up a research question, followed by conducting a small research project to answer this question. The module taught students important research skills, and I noted that in their coursework, students had made use of a wide range of analytical software, including Ncapture and NVivo.
- New Frontiers: It was with pleasure that I noted that this module has been updated again, this time addressing (in the Autumn semester) the issue of social media, thus really living up to its name New Frontiers. In the spring semester, last year's exam has been replaced by group coursework, thus making use of more creative ways of assessing students which also teach them important team working skills. The group work element has also led to a clear improvement in seminar attendance

### **Issue(s) Raised by Alice Bradbury (Education)**

1. Dissertations are second marked, but there is less clarity in relation to how these marks are reconciled and where a third marker is used.
2. It would be good to have clear marking criteria for all methods of assessment, including presentations and reflective statements, to ensure consistency across the year group and over time.

### **Positive comments:**

- There is a range of assessment across the programme which is exemplary.
- The dissertation conference was a very effective way of bringing students together (including those from year 2) and creating a sense of a community of researchers.

### **Issue(s) Raised by Henrietta O'Connor (Sociology)**

1. One area in which would benefit from additional attention concerns the feedback to certain students. Overall the feedback was good, however, in cases where the student was struggling to achieve a pass grade or achieving quite low grades very little guidance was provided on how to improve this.
2. In some cases I wonder if students are given too much choice in terms of the number of questions used in examinations. For example, I noticed a few cases where students were asked to answer two questions from a list of 10. This seemed a little excessive and perhaps creates additional work for the course leaders with little return – as most students tended to select the same questions anyway (i.e. using up only 3 or 4 of the 10 choices).
3. The exam scripts uploaded on to Grademark were useful to see but proved quite hard to moderate without the inclusion of the marker comments. I would like to see a brief comment that explains the mark awarded being made available to the external examiner.
4. The process by which dissertations are assessed is slightly problematic and this has been recognised by the team. The current system means that the supervisor plays no role in assessing the dissertations and this omission led to what were quite harsh comments and grades being awarded in some cases – because the main supervisor was not involved in the assessment of work. I believe that this issue is in the process of being addressed and the outcome of this is that the supervisor will automatically act as second marker. This will facilitate discussion between the markers and ensure that the first marker is fully informed about each individual student. I support this change whole-heartedly.

### **Positive comments:**

- Indeed much of the work I viewed was of a very high standard and both staff and students are to be congratulated on the high standard of much of the work produced.
- The team have addressed the comments made last year and done in an exemplary way. I found the reports outlining the department and institutional response very clear and comprehensive in explaining how the feedback had been acted upon.
- The practice of arranging meetings between the course teams and the external examiners is excellent. This was an outstanding feature of practice at Cardiff and very welcome. The course teams were without exception enthusiastic, engaged and clearly very committed to their modules and to the students.
- The module guidelines (handouts) are also exemplary. These are detailed, high quality learning guides which should be invaluable to all students. The Undergraduate Module handbook is also of high quality.
- Some of the assessment methods were innovative and carefully designed to not only 'assess' students but to also deepen their learning and develop transferable skills (e.g. the use of reflective journals, group work, short report style assessments) and to engage the students fully in the learning process. I would encourage staff to share their successes with more innovative methods with colleagues where appropriate.
- I was impressed by the range and breadth of the assessment methods. Staff are very imaginative in the types of assessment adopted and it is evident from discussions with module leaders that considerable thought is given to this process and staff constantly reflect on what has worked well and what needs further refining.
- It was pleasing to learn that Cardiff offer students the opportunity to undertake a work placement during their degree studies and that the development of transferable 'employability' skills is supported and encouraged by the department.

- The range of dissertation topics selected by the students is impressive and reflects very well on the staff and the course design which seems to encourage the students to develop their sociological imaginations in a very impressive way. The practice of requiring students to present their dissertation work in a conference style environment (and the inclusion of external examiners in this process) is further evidence of noteworthy practice which I would hope to see emulated by other Sociology departments.
- The administrative side of the examining process is very efficient and I would like to thank Karen Chivers and the team for all their hard work in making sure everything runs smoothly.

### **Issue(s) Raised by Emma Wincup (Criminology)**

1. My only concern about standards relates to a policy that the University has introduced to restrict the category of required modules to those which are needed for professional purposes. As a result, one student was able to obtain a 2:1 degree in Sociology without passing Social Research Methods. This is problematic for a number of reasons but principally I imagine that they could not demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes for the award. In my own department, we would not permit this and would not allow a student to embark on their dissertation without demonstrating competence in criminological research. This is clearly something which some of the internal examiners felt uncomfortable with because at the progression board it was recommended that a student who had failed a compulsory (but not pass for progression/award) module switched to a different programme.
2. I commented last year that I think the School might articulate more clearly what is required to obtain a particular grade. In my own department, we produce brief 'answer notes' (a paragraph for each question) to help markers and external examiners understand what the person setting the question was looking for. I think these would be particularly useful for the short answer questions which have been introduced for some examinations in 14/15. We also publish generic feedback alongside individual feedback. Whilst I have now 'retired' I am happy to talk through these suggestions.
3. I would encourage the team to reflect further on what changes they might make to allow students to demonstrate a wider range of skills as there is still a great deal of emphasis on unseen exams and traditional essays.

### **Positive comments:**

- A number of changes have been made to assessments in 14/15 and I think these have enhanced the programme in that they reduce the amount of assessment and provide a better balance between assessing breadth and depth of knowledge.
- The move to Gradebook seems to have been successful and on the whole the feedback provided to students was clear and supportive.
- It has been a pleasure to act as external examiner for these programmes and to work with the small and dedicated staff team to enhance them. They have actively sought my advice on a number of issues as well as responded to suggestions I have made. The programmes continue to attract excellent students and I wish the staff team ever success in developing them further.



### **Issue(s) Raised by Emma Uprichard (Sociology)**

1. It might be useful to have two or three real students – almost like case studies – given to the external at the start of their term, so that he or she can follow individual students throughout their degree.
2. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, medians and standard deviations) across modules would be good to have ahead of the board meeting
3. Only one module had a 'moderator report' where the first marker had summed up what they'd done and passed this over to the moderator. Seeing this 'discussion' was excellent. It would be good if this could be done across all modules
4. I saw mostly quantitative dissertations and felt overall that the marks might have been more generous. What exactly are students being marked on in dissertations? Synthesising work or practical empirical work? If both, then they may need more help to go beyond description. But they also need to be given credit for engaging with variables meaningfully too
5. Learning Central is very difficult and confusing for me. It would be easier if ALL assessment of a module was EITHER online OR offline. The mix is confusing.
6. I think external should have 'view only' rights on Learning Central.
7. But I am still not very able to see the 'big picture' in terms of marking and marks awarded across markers/modules/years/programmes etc.
8. It is to both the students' and the School's advantage to venture up to the 80%-90%+ mark range for the best quality work. In most instances, this is unlikely to change the degree classification. But since the degree is based on the absolute average – from 0 to 100, it is important to raise the marks in the marks, especially in the 70-100 range. To do this, markers might be encouraged to award only 75, 80, 85, 90 marks in the upper band. This would ensure equity among what is considered a 'high' or 'mid' 1st class so as to safeguard that the qualitative/categorical value of the work overall.
9. Markers might be encouraged to use higher scores in the first class band. I do worry that, given the way that the degree classification is calculated, that the best students are missing out on receiving best degree outcomes.
10. It would be good to be clearer on what are 'required' or 'core' modules on particular degrees and indeed what the implications are of these decisions.

### **Positive comments:**

- The degree is impressive in its capacity to teach key issues that have been longstanding issues in Sociology (e.g. theory, work, etc.) and at the same time incorporate newer issues into the programme as well (digital methods, childhood etc.). This mixture of 'old' and 'new' is excellent and one that I think Cardiff can be proud of
- I am impressed by both the depth and breadth of the programme
- The Chair of the board does an excellent job at 'holding the meeting', encouraging discussion, and explaining the university examination regulations

## **RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **Programme Structure**

Professor Powell raises two points for the team here about programme structure: (i) variation in choice of questions (choose x from y), and (ii) 'effort' involved in assessment (word count and length of examination).

As regards (i), we agree that variation here should not be excessive, but think both that some variation is necessary and also that the apparent variation (which can be observed from module outlines & exam papers) is perhaps not indicative of the 'actual' extent of choice students face. The need for some variation is due to variation in naturally emerging 'topics' or themes, or sub-division of a semester's teaching into blocks to be delivered by different lecturers. It is also the case that students are sometimes directed in class that certain topics will not come up, or indeed that certain topics will come up in an examination. In both cases, the latter reduces the 'y' in question. However, we have taken steps to reduce the variation in number of questions across modules in previous years, and I propose that we monitor and, where feasible, take steps to reduce this variation again.

As regards (ii), our modules have been (and to some extent are still in the process of) moving into line with UG Board of Studies directives as regards the effort involved in assessment. Certainly, there is less variation this year than last and we will look at this again when decisions regarding assessment for 2016/17 is to be made (spring 2016).

### **Academic Standards**

Professors Powell and Dr. Uprichard ask that descriptive statistics for modules (e.g. means, medians, standard deviations and coefficients of variation) should be available at the Examination Board. Such reports are already prepared for our Post Examination Board meeting that usually takes place one week after the Examination Board has met. The main reason we have been unable to prepare such reports for the Examination Board is largely due to the capacity of staff in preparing other items for the Board. However, the School is currently revising its professional services and this will hopefully provide greater capacity to prepare such reports in advance of the Examination Board. As Chair I am also fully committed to ensure the School undertakes more rigorous analysis of its assessment data in the future.

Dr Uprichard also suggests that external examiners are given a profile of two or three students (as case studies) to show their progress throughout their degree. This is an excellent suggestion and will be considered in the coming year (but see previous point about changes to the professional services in the School).

Professor Powell raises some concern about over-generous marking towards the 'bottom end' of its Categorical Marking Scheme. The Social Policy teaching team will continue to monitor academic standards and will pay particular attention to the generosity of marks at the bottom end (especially regarding short assignments) and where similarity scores are high. More generally, assignments with high similarity scores are reviewed both by the module convenor and by the Year Tutor, and in 2014/15 greater use was made of both unfair practice procedures and informal

discussions/in-text feedback to students to emphasise the importance of submitting original work.

Dr Wincup and Dr Uprichard both note concerns about the way the University operationalises Required and Core modules on degree pathways. The School has drawn this matter to the attention of colleagues in the University Registry and University clarification is being sought.

Dr Wincup also suggests that the School should consider preparing 'answer notes', to help guide markers (and external examiners) in their assessment of work. This is a good suggestion and will be considered further by the School.

### **The Assessment Process**

Six external examiners raise concerns about the assessment process. These concerns include: the process and auditing of moderation (Powell, Uprichard and May), and specifically for the Dissertation module (Bradbury, O'Connor); reminders to students about penalties for exceeding the word length on assignments (Powell); low levels of assessment feedback particularly for the very low and high achievers (O'Connor, Powell); variations in levels and quality of assessment feedback between modules (May); broadening the range of assessment items in Criminology modules (Wincup); the use of Grademark, and the use of the rubric function in particular, and ensuring that feedback on Grademark includes things to commend and things to improve for future work) (May); clear marking criteria for all methods of assessment (Bradbury); the marking of quantitative undergraduate dissertations (Uprichard) and too many choices of questions in examinations (O'Connor).

The School will seek to ensure that moderation reports are available for all modules for the 2015/16 session. The assessment process for Dissertations is changing and will now include the supervisor as one of the two markers. It is even more important, therefore, that we have a detailed account of how final marks are derived, particularly where there is disagreement between the two markers.

Students are informed about penalties for exceeding word length and for submitting after the deadline. This information is available in the Undergraduate Assessment Handbook and which is also available on Learning Central. The importance of reminding students about this shared. However, we are reluctant to include details about assessment systems in module handbooks as this could lead to miscommunication or inconsistencies. Instead we will look to see whether this information can be included as part of the Turnitin system on Learning Central.

Dr Uprichard queries how quantitative undergraduate dissertations are assessed, and was particularly concerned that marks were ungenerous. The School provides additional support and guidance for quantitative undergraduate dissertations through its Q-Step Centre. These concerns will be considered by the module team and colleagues in Q-Step.

There are a number of comments relating to feedback. This continues to be an area of great focus for the School, and we are continually developing new ideas, methods and systems to ensure students get valuable and insightful feedback. Indeed, the School has recently introduced a new management structure to recognise the need

for lead individual academics to lead on key areas of our work. This includes quality and feedback. During the course of the year there will be a further review of feedback mechanisms, including the use of Grademark, sharing best practice, and developing new proposals (including the possible use of 'answer notes' and the rubric function in Grademark. In the meantime, colleagues will be reminded of our existing requirements and expectations and the comments of the External Examiners will be shared and discussed at forthcoming Undergraduate Board of Studies meetings. Particular attention will be given to ensuring all students receive high quality and formative feedback, irrespective of what their marks are, and that there is consistency across modules in the level and quality of feedback.

Dr Bradbury suggests we consider developing assessment criteria for different assessment types. We currently use a single assessment criteria framework. Our concern about developing bespoke assessment criteria for different assessment types is that we then lose the overarching framework for how we are assessing students' understanding, knowledge and skills. Assessment methods should be developed to help us assess students against this common criteria, not the other way around. It may be that the development of 'answer notes' (suggested by Dr Wincup) provides a better way of ensuring there is at least transparency in the way different assessment types are marked. This very important issue will be discussed further within the School over the coming months.

Relatedly, Professor O'Connor queries how much choice students are given in examinations. This is a very useful observation. In one module (SI0072) there are a relatively large number of possible examination questions provided to students. This partly reflects the way the module is divided into themes and how the module convenor attempts to capture and will be considered further by the School, and particularly the Sociology teaching team.

### **Year-On-Year Comments**

Professor Powell continues to raise concerns about the role of the Examination Board, particularly in relation to the level of discretion Boards now have and the way Examination Boards are organised. The first point on discretion of the Examination Board and the wider role of External Examiners has been raised with the University. They are about to undertake a review of this in light of changes to the way examination board outcomes are not derived. The School already makes good use of its External Examiners through their meetings with module convenors before the Examination Board meets. We do note, however, that spreading the Board meetings over two days may be unnecessary. However, other external examiners welcome the amount of time they get to spend in Cardiff to discuss teaching and learning (and other networking opportunities this affords). We will reconsider the arrangements but major changes are unlikely to occur for 2015-16 given we are going through a process of change within our professional services.

Professor Powell also raises concerns about current staffing levels across the Social Policy modules. His concerns are noted and will be shared with the School's Senior Management Team. We note that Social Policy currently have a higher module/staff ratio than many other teaching teams, but recent successes in grant capture will mean that over the coming years the teaching capacity of the core team will be reduced, whilst also introducing a new MSc in Social and Public Policy.

Dr May raises concerns about the moderation process that have been addressed above. But Dr May also highlights inconsistencies in the quality, content and organisation of Module Handbooks. The Undergraduate team and the Director of the Undergraduate Board of Studies will undertake a thorough review of Module Handbooks during 2015-16 to ensure they are appropriately produced.

Dr Uprichard raises concerns about Learning Central, particularly in relation to the use of online assessment via Grademark (or not). Currently the School is committed to using Grademark and colleagues are in the process of moving their assessment to using Grademark. However, during this time of transition there will be some staff, for whatever reason, who will continue to assess work offline. However, we hope to move to a position where all work is assessed using Grademark in the coming years. Dr Uprichard also suggest that external examiners should have 'view only' rights in Learning Central. This suggestion will be taken forward by the School with our information services colleagues.

Finally, Dr Uprichard makes a number of points about using the full range of marks, particularly for the best quality work (i.e. to use marks above 80% where appropriate). In particular, Dr Uprichard suggests using a smaller number of categorical marks at the upper end to encourage a wider use of marks. Colleagues will be reminded to use the School's marking schedule and encouraged to use the full range of marks where appropriate. The School will also consider the suggestion to limit the number of categorical marks available at the upper and lower ends of the marking range.