



Academic & Student Support Services
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Sent by email to mark.woolford@kcl.ac.uk

20 July 2016

Dear Professor Woolford,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2015– 2016

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BDS (Hons) (Final BDS).

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. Your comments on the use of a 40% pass mark.
2. Your indication that it is not possible to determine how marks are awarded by different examiners in the written papers, nor how consensus of mark is arrived at.
3. Your indication that candidates should not attend assessments with a name badge;
4. Your detailed observations on the structure of the three written papers of identical format;
5. Your reiterated indication that standard setting must be introduced for all written examinations;
6. Your suggestion that a timekeeper should be available for the unseen case discussions;
7. Your indication that the single marking of student cases should be reviewed.

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

1. This comment has been made by examiners in the past and as a result, the School is introducing a revised BDS from 2016 entry and the regulations for this include a pass mark of 50% (standard set). The School will continue to ensure that standards remain at a high standard and that marking continues to reflect that students meet requirements.
2. External Examiners are provided with the marks from both internal examiners and the agreed mark sheets. The School will clarify its processes for next year.
3. The School agrees with your concern and will review the instructions provided to candidates.
4. The School will be reviewing the format of the written examinations as the revised BDS progresses, and is grateful for your observations. You will be consulted on any potential changes.
5. The School is moving forward with formal standard setting, and with the confirmation of the appointment of our psychometrician role for 1st October 2016, is progressing this. Next year the School will be implementing full standard setting within the revised BDS programme. In addition, the changes to the Programme Regulations for the revised BDS include the introduction of a 50% pass mark (standard set).
6. The School agrees that this would be a sensible measure to implement and will endeavour to do so for 2017.
7. The School agrees with your comment, but unfortunately Grademark, at present, does not allow full double blind marking. The School currently calibrates both examiners by initial joint marking followed by shared marking and final moderation of reports at borderline, failed and distinction cases. Cardiff University have put a formal request to Turnitin to explore opportunities for double blind marking in Grademark.

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 confirmation that the assessment process is under constant review by the programme team;
3. your particular commendation of changes in the unseen case format.

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