

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2013-2014 - MRes in Biosciences

Dear Professor Bryant,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of Biosciences 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

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

"The School of Biosciences would like to thank Professor Bryant for her supportive and constructive comments, both in this report and in person and for identifying several elements of good practice. The course team was heartened to receive the accolade from Professor Bryant describing the course as an outstanding MRes designed specifically to make the students uniquely placed to follow a research career. We are also grateful for her positive comments regarding excellent feedback to the students and refining the course in response to student comments. These positive comments will be disseminated to staff and students.

We will address her particular concerns below.

- 1. [1.1] the External Examiner's detailed observations and comments regarding a named module (interface between theory and practical application and feedback);**
- 2. [1.1] the External Examiner's report of concerns regarding double booking of rooms.**

1. [1.1] Observations and comments regarding a named module:

The issues that had arisen during the course of the autumn semester teaching of Bioinformatics (BIT010) were discussed at length at the January Exam board. The module team was aware of the problems (double-room bookings and bioinformatics practical work) and had duly highlighted these at Scheme Board meetings. The module content is currently under review to develop teaching strategies to ensure that the students are equipped to handle the content and assessments demanded in the Bioinformatics route of this module (BIT010).

2. [1.1] Double Booking of Rooms:

Following the External Examiners visit in January 2014, a meeting of key staff (both administrative and academic) was held to resolve the double booking of rooms in the School of Biosciences. Administrators and academics have been instructed in the process of room booking using the university Scientia system. Provisional room bookings are in place for the academic session 2014-15, all staff (undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes) involved are aware that room booking should be monitored throughout the summer period. With this increased understanding of the room booking system we do not envisage a problem with double booking of rooms during the 2014-15 session."

Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure and assessment process;**
- b. **[1.6] your commendation of the Programme, including its design, its spread of techniques, communications and technical skills, the feedback provided to students and the responsiveness of the MSc staff to feedback from External Examiners.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

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 Registry web pages and will be available publically.

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.

Dr C B Turner
Director of Student Services and Governance