

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - BScEcon in International Relations

Dear Professor Hayden,

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 European Languages, Translation and Politics 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.

1. **[6] your indication that "the extent of feedback provided to students did vary, with some staff providing extensive and detailed feedback while others were rather brief";**
2. **[6] your encouragement for "a move from handwritten feedback";**
3. **[3] your request "to be provided at the start of the academic year (or each semester) with a list of all the key dates [for receipt of] exam question papers, exam scripts and essay samples, as far as is practicable";**

The following response has been provided by the Chair of the Undergraduate Politics Examining Board on behalf of the School.

1. *"The Politics Department aims to give high quality feedback to all students on all of its modules. This feedback takes several forms, including verbal face-to-face feedback and marginal comments alongside the body of the essay. Often, an external examiner sees only the summary feedback comments on a separate feedback sheet / at the end of the essay as the bulk of marginal comments are returned to the student with the essay. However, the Head of Politics, is convening a working group to look at our assessment more broadly and this will be looking closely at our feedback practices. In doing so it will be building on the work of our existing student focus group on Politics feedback."*
2. *"See my previous comment. Additionally, several members of staff are trialling full electronic marking through Grademark on Turnitin this year. One driver for this trial is a desire to move to all typewritten feedback in the most efficient and effective way."*
3. *"There are some practical issues with providing very exact information. All externals should be provided with the exam board dates and the dates of the exam periods. This information will, in future if it hasn't in the past, be accompanied with some contextual information about how the flow of work would typically map onto these dates. Being more precise than this is not possible until the exam timetables are published for each period and that does not happen until late in each semester."*

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, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[1] your indication that the range and depth of modules are "certainly comparable with the very best institutions in this field";**

- c. **[6] your indication that you were impressed “by the diversity of assessment strategies that were used” and your commendation for staff on the “robust and rigorous process of internal moderation”.**

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.

Mrs Jill Bedford
Director of Registry and Academic Services