

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MSc/PG Diploma/PG Certificate in Medical Education (via e-learning)**

Dear Professor Needham,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education 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.

***"It may be worth revisiting the overall aims of the course in a contemporary climate...changes in UK regulation of trainers; as medical educators may require specific consideration'.***

*The aims and programme outcomes have been mapped to the recent GMC requirements for Educational and Clinical Supervisors (based on the Academy of Medical Educators Professional Standards).*

***"...‘the use of the personal tutor by students is inconsistent and may require review.’***

*All of the students on this programme are healthcare professionals (predominantly doctors) and many of them at a very senior level. As such, their need for, and use of, personal tutor support varies. As this is an online programme, the personal tutors are sensitive to the potential for learners to feel isolated and, therefore, a programmed schedule of contact is used. Personal tutors make contact by e-mail with each student at the start of the course to introduce both themselves and the personal tutor system. At this point they explain that they would be happy to read and comment on a plan for each assignment (one side of A4) – this is also explained in the student handbook. Once each set of assignments has been marked at the end of the module then personal tutors are given a list of results for their students. Each tutor at this point e-mails each of their tutees and comments on progress and again offers support. This means that personal tutors contact their students at a minimum of five occasions throughout the academic session. Several students make contact with their personal tutors at other points throughout the year but some don't feel that this is necessary and these are the ones that are referred to in the external examiner's report.*

***'...some students seem to be seeking more interaction from peers and faculty and it may be worth considering newer technologies to support such a need.'***

*2012/13 has proved to be more difficult than most to encourage students to interact within the modules. Online tutors have continued to provide regular interaction within the modules and this has been monitored within the performance dashboard of Learning Central. Feedback was provided to students on their level of interaction within the initial modules and this was commented upon by personal tutors in their e-mails with students. This will be closely monitored within the next academic 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, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[3] your observation that “Feedback on submitted materials is well-structured and of a high quality”;**
- c. **[6] your indication that “As preparation for lifelong learning as a medical practitioner, these programmes offer an excellent generic approach and the online mode of delivery seems entirely appropriate for the students who have elected for it”.**

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