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Sent by email to c.a.dmello@city.ac.uk

05 October 2017

Dear Professor D'Mello,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2016–2017

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BEng/MEng in Architectural Engineering / Civil Engineering / Civil and Environmental Engineering.

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. The pass rates for Year 2 and 3 should continue to be monitored.
2. One or two modules that had high averages over the last two years.
3. Moderation of the 50-Credit module taken abroad.

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

1. We shall continue to monitor Year 2 and 3 pass rates, which do show an improvement from last year. The Pass rates for Year 2 have improved from 62% to 70%, Year3B graduation rates from 78% to 88% and Year 3M progression from 93% to 95%. A further review of Year 2 failure rates will be conducted via the ACE BoS during the coming session.

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The School plans to monitor and report pass and graduation rates for all Years within both the exam board and board of studies, and investigate whether any specific modules or course components unfairly impact student performance.

2. Module averages which fall outside our expected range for BEng (45% to 65%) and MEng (55% to 75%) students should be investigated and module leaders report the circumstances which have resulted in the module averages being outside the expected range. The exam board should then decide whether to moderate averages accordingly.

Where modules show a continuous trend over a few years, the module leader will be asked to review the module and propose any remedies to the board of studies accordingly.

The School plans to monitor module averages and instruct module leaders whose averages have consistently been outside the expected range to review the module and propose a remedy to the board of studies.

3. With reference to the MEng International students, ACE receives a transcript of achievement for each student from the Overseas Institution regarding their semester abroad module results at an agreed date. These results are then converted to an equivalent mark for a 50-credit Cardiff module (EN3092 International Experience).

The process of mapping and approving equivalent modules with new overseas partners includes an assessment by the ACE academic advisors (mobility tutor) of individual examination papers, model answers prepared by the teaching academic and the range of marks obtained by the last cohort to take each examination.

For each module deemed equivalent to an ACE module, the mobility tutor will convert results to an equivalent mark for the 50-credit module according to the credit transfer matrix conversion table prepared by the University. The matrices themselves are presented to the ACE Boards of Study for approval.

The performance of the student in relation to the overseas module cohort and past Cardiff University results may be used to moderate the student outcome in-line with current exam board guidelines, as deemed necessary.

The School plans to present the updated credit transfer matrix conversion table to next ACE BoS, and ensure that the exam board follows current moderation processes for MEng International students in relation to module EN3092.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

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1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. flexible no-choice examination papers;
3. excellent design projects, personal development folders and field trips;
4. impressive management of considerable changes impacting on the programme during your time as an External Examiner.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we thank you for your continued support of the programme.

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

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