



Academic & Student Support Services
Academic Registrar Simon Wright LLB
Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr
Cofrestrwydd Academaidd Simon Wright LLB

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE

Tel *Ffôn* | +44(0)29 2087 9189
www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE

Sent by email to hs01@le.ac.uk

18 September 2017

Dear Professor O'Connor,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BA/BSc/BSc(Econ)/LLB (Sociology and Social Science modules).

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. Some modules offer too much choice of questions in assessments.
2. The need for earlier access to assessment materials via Learning Central for External Examiners.

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

1. The School and University have no policy on the number of questions expected in each assessment. Currently, therefore, this remains at the discretion of module convenors. The School confirms that this might change in the near future, acknowledging that reducing the number of questions in one module this year (following your advice) had led to positive results. Module convenors will review this aspect of their assessments this coming year.

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2. SOCSI produces a timetable for external examiners. For this coming year The School we will send reminders throughout the academic year to external examiners about what they are expected or encouraged to look as and when necessary. This should help external examiners manage the process better, including their access to Learning Central. The School has identified a problem with Learning Central (including access to Turnitin and Grademark) that stems from when external examiners change the email address they are provided (ending @cardiff.ac.uk) with their own institutional email address. Apparently this generates a conflict that can mean access to our Cardiff online resources might not work properly. External examiners will be encouraged not to change their profile details.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. overall, the teaching and learning practice is excellent and there are examples of innovation in teaching methods and assessment across the modules;
3. some examples of very high quality assessment (S10240) – a fantastic cover sheet used by the markers which could be adopted across all modules and used as a feedback tool to students;
4. professional and dedicated academic and professional services staff, supporting students to produce some outstanding work, including impressive standard of dissertations
5. impressive “Work and Employment” module.

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