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**Sent by email to Professor Janice Ellis**

**24 June 2019**

Dear Professor Ellis,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19**

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Finals)

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. The breadth of topic areas included within the students' finals year projects.
3. The exceptional support given to students during the viva examinations, particularly by the administrative support staff and the nursing staff.

**Issues highlighted in your report:**

1. **Unseen case viva's:** There is still some variability in examiner alignment; A more structured question set would go some way to improve this.
2. **Unseen case viva's:** Calibration resources are not used to their full potential; Greater time should be allowed between examiners viewing the resource, and receiving feedback and the examination itself.
3. **Unseen case viva's:** The use of a "Veto fail" should be reconsidered.



4. **Unseen case viva's:** The mark sheets and the scale needs to be amended slightly to align to the standard of the safe beginner and the common grade scale.
5. **Written Papers:** The attempt to equally weight questions is thwarted by the marking scheme and inclusion of half marks.
6. **Written Papers:** A number of questions would have benefitted from more stringent quality assurance processes.
7. **Written Papers:** A minimum of 5 raters should be required in the standard setting process.

### **Response provided by the School:**

Thank you to Professor Ellis for supporting our Final BDS examinations this academic year and the careful constructive feedback you have provided on our processes. Thank you also for recognising the changes we have made previously to enhance our practices.

### **In regard to the Unseen Case Vivas**

The use and suitability of the veto fail category will be reviewed again this year by our Senior Education Team following the previous review last academic year as part of our ongoing quality assurance processes. The School had introduced further training and clarification to describe when a veto would be appropriate for each Unseen Case, as at that time as the School had a consensus view that the veto should be retained. Whilst the use of the veto fail was not actually applied this year it would seem appropriate with further feedback that this decision should be revisited.

As part of this review we will also review the marking criteria at the same time to ensure that it is explicit where the line for the "safe beginner" sits. With the improved access to the calibration for internal examiners for the next diet the School anticipates more time to allow feedback and reflective calibration for our internal examiners.

### **In regard to the written papers**

The use of our new software to standard set assures now that a minimum of five internal examiners must rate each question before the paper is released and will ensure that the quality assurance process at question level is maintained. This will be supported with further internal examiner training. The use of 0.5 marks will be reviewed and considered for the 2020/21 Finals Examination.

The School will keep you informed following further discussions in relation to the above for this programme and any changes that are proposed for your overview.

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

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's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wright', written in a cursive style.

Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar