

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2013-2014 - BDS (Hons) (Final BDS)

Dear Dr Waterhouse,

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

- “1. [4 (Case Presentations: third para)] the External Examiner's detailed observation of “variation between examiners” in the marking of one component and suggested enhancement of the marking criteria**

The School thanks Dr Waterhouse for the detailed comments provided. The additional 10% marks available have been removed for the next academic year. The School accepts that as part of the process common questions would be useful as a starting point. However, it is felt that questions cannot be totally structured as it is dependent upon the student in the viva. It is agreed that there could be further guidance and this will be reviewed.

- 2. [4 (Case Presentations: fourth para and Unseen Case Presentation: fifth para)] detailed comments and suggested reductions in the length of the examinations**

The School agrees with the suggestion made in relation to the length of the examinations.

- 3. [4 (Unseen Case Presentation: second para)] the External Examiner's comment that “As this examination continues to be developed, the assessment team should look at an approach to standardising the cases used and work towards providing a basic ‘core list’ of questions an examiner should ask, with additional complex questions for the stronger students”**

The School welcomes the suggestion made in relation producing a “core list” and will forward this to the Assessment and Feedback Committee for action.

- 4. [4 (Unseen Case Presentation: third para)] the External Examiner's indicated that “There were very few paediatric cases” and related comments and suggestion**

The Finals BDS Programme in Cardiff does not examine disciplines separately and students are permitted to choose the cases they present. The Unseen Cases did include child cases but the School recognises that not all students will have been examined on an unseen child case. The School continues to review the cases for finals examination and will consider this as part of that review.

- 5. [4 (Unseen Case presentation: fourth para)] The observation that “Fewer cases would need to be used if cases used repeatedly with quarantine of students to prevent ‘examination memory’ aiding the students examined later. This would also help towards standardising the examination further”**

As Professor Waterhouse indicates the unseen case is a recent modification to the examination in order to ensure greater consistency than was possible with a live patient case. The School is continuing to explore ways to improve and welcomes comments made. The reduction of cases as suggested will be considered further."

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 commendation of staff supporting the examination process;**
- c. [4, 5 and 6] your commendation of the "on-line training package" for External Examiners involved in oral examinations.**

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.

Dr S L Williamson

for Dr C B Turner
Academic Registrar