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**Sent by email to [jeni.harden@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jeni.harden@ed.ac.uk)**

**05 January 2018**

Dear Dr Harden,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the Doctor of Health Studies (DHS), taught-element.

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. Lack of critical engagement in concepts particularly among weaker students.
2. Amongst the weaker students there was also a lack of significant improvement from draft stage to final submission despite the very detailed comments provided.
3. Information on the marking process provided verbally.
4. Opportunities outside the formal Examining Boards for External Examiners to meet and discuss plans for programme development and challenges.

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

1. This is acknowledged by the programme team and is reflected module assessment outcomes. The programme regulations, which require a 60% overall module average mark to progressing to thesis stage, ensure that only

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those students who have demonstrated satisfactory academic standards, including in relation to critical engagement, progress to thesis stage. For those who do not, alternative awards are available, as appropriate.

2. Again, this has been noted and is acknowledged by the programme team. This issue is addressed in module assessment as a specific assessment criteria for each taught module. Draft feedback is acted upon by students and this is evident in their final submission.
3. Incoming External Examiners are now informed of the programme internal marking process, both verbally and in writing.
4. The programme team has noted your comments and is always willing to be as flexible as possible to accommodate time for External Examiners to discuss broader issues (either before or after the Examining Board or by email at other times).

**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 support provided by the School's administrative team;
3. the quality of feedback and support given to students, allowing some flexibility in their progression through the Programme.

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