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Sent by email to Professor Pieter de Wilde

26 November 2018

Dear Professor de Wilde,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2017/18

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MSc Environmental Design of Buildings.

Your report has been considered by 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](#).

Issues highlighted in your report:

1. Programme Structure: One comment passed on from students was that they would like more computing facilities, as the number of machines does not match the number of students on the course and at times, this leads to bottlenecks.
2. Academic Standards: Regarding marking - it was noted that some modules had marks in a rather narrow band (50-70% and 60-80%); it is recommended that the team reviews whether there are opportunities to get a wider spread.
3. Assessment Process: Regarding feedback - the feedback is okay for all modules, but there are some variations in the amount of feedback provided. Recommend that this is standardized.

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4. Assessment Process: An issue that the team still needs to review is the audit trail of the moderation process. Moderation taking place is not clearly signposted and might leave the staff at risk from potential student complaints. Recommend that a clear moderation form is used and keep track of all efforts in this domain.
5. Assessment Process: Regarding formative feedback - suggest that a review of the amount of formative feedback given is carried out. For some modules a presentation early in the timetable may help to ensure student engagement early on in the module.
6. Year on Year Comments: The work offered for review is almost completely digital, which works well in principle. However, the posters are hard to read on a regular laptop. It's suggested that the School print a sample on paper, or provide large TV screens to allow study of these as a whole, rather than having to move a view across the elements of the poster.
7. Year on Year Comments: A suggestion that may require deeper restructuring of the programme, is whether the amount of modules can be reduced; in total there are now 9, which is a high number, and some of these only count for 10 credits. Suggest that there are less modules which may ease workload.

Response provided by the School:

1. The existing 4 PCs have been replaced with new PCs. We have also had 4 additional PCs installed. All of these PCs have been populated with the software required for the ASM courses.
2. Bands of marking will be reviewed at the ASM Programme Leaders meeting.
3. A meeting of module leaders will be arranged to review the amount of feedback provided for the modules.
4. A revised marksheet has been proposed to module leaders to ensure the transparency of moderation. A reminder of this will be communicated at the module leader meeting called to deal with item 3
5. Formative feedback will be reviewed at the module leader meeting called to deal with item 3.
6. A large screen will be provided in the external examiner's room.
7. Restructuring of the programme to reduce the number of modules will be reviewed in line with other developments to the course which are under consideration.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. Students appear to be happy with the course as offered. The new student base is highly appreciated.
3. Overall marks provided were clearly based on a transparent assessment process, with good feedback to the students and signposting of where additional marks could have been earned.
4. As noted in the previous year, the distance learning element of the EDB course seems to be doing extremely well. The team is commended for the hard work that goes into this extra load.

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,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar