

Academic & Student Support Services
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Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to j.driffill@bbk.ac.uk

27 August 2015

Dear Professor Driffill,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2014 – 2015

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the Business Economics / Economics with EU Language / Banking & Finance / Economics & Finance / Economics & Management Studies (macroeconomics).

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.

Issue(s) Highlighted:

1. Your observations that the standard of work needed to obtain a first class or upper second class mark on a module or a degree programme overall may be slowly easing;
2. Consideration of the median and standard deviation of some modules and the causes of varying distributions of marks across modules.

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

1. In part the problem of high module marks results from the second point raised by the External, while that relating to the high proportion of firsts and upper second degrees awarded reflects that issue in combination with the use by the University of averages to determine degree classifications. It is suggested that, by tackling the second issue raised by the External, as indicated below, this problem may, at least in part, be alleviated.
2. As indicated in the response to the External's comments in 2013-14, the Board of Studies is aware of such issues and is trying to address it. While in 2013-14 and 2014-15 the issue was, in part, dealt with ex post, through an exam mark review meeting held prior to the meeting of the exam board, this is, to a large extent, a remedial exercise in which there is something of a reluctance to change marks on individual modules since this impinges on colleagues' academic judgement. Hence, there is clearly also a need to adopt an ex ante approach. In 2015-16, Teaching Teams will be required to pay particular attention when setting assessments to

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ensure consistency of expectations and also to check that the assessments will enable markers to distinguish students across the whole range of abilities.

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 general standard of the students' work was good, indicating a preponderance of able, well-prepared candidates and a high standard of teaching.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme 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 Student Intranet 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