

Academic & Student Support Services
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Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to velson.horie@manchester.ac.uk

29 July 2015

Dear Mr Horie,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MSc Conservation and the MSc in Care of Collections (Archaeological Conservation modules).

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. Consideration of more succinct or structured forms of feedback that includes a developmental and mentoring component to help those graduates aiming to progress into conservation as a career, guiding their forward planning;
2. Consideration of the use of alumni in promoting the quality of the course and products;
3. The development of a QAA benchmark statement for conservation.

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

1. We plan to meet as a teaching group over the summer in order to review what is possible. The goal will be to make feedback more succinct. We aim to give some advice to students via the term grade in HST 460 but it is a requirement that academic feedback must be on the work submitted. We must also consider the recommendation to be more succinct. Students are given career advice informally via our workplace partnerships officer and there are 2 pieces of assessed work that offer the opportunity for developmental advice, the portfolio in HST 460 and job application in the core skills module HST 500. We will review the opportunity to use the HST 460 portfolio as a means to look forward as well as back. We will ensure that the external examiner for science is aware of the range of assessment and feedback in the core skills modules that they have not been formally asked to consider.
2. We are very pleased to report that one of our alumni from the first year of the MSc conservation practice has just been shortlisted for the prestigious Icon conservation awards for student conservator. We have used this as an opportunity for promotion.

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We maintain a network of alumni via social media, and are constantly on the look out to share the success of our alumni via the schools Facebook, twitter and web profile. I have encouraged colleagues in marketing to pick up on the work of our alumni Lisa Young. Her work on NASA collections at the Smithsonian and currently on the #rebootthesuit project are very high profile. The external examiners encouragement in this area is very welcome.

3. The University notes your comments regarding the development of a QAA benchmark statement for conservation and will discuss further with the School.

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 feedback to students on submitted work is expansive and thorough, more than most comparable courses;
3. This course is unusual and valuable in the UK by including practical conservation as a major component - thoroughly taught and assessed in-house
4. The high level of support for students and quality of emerging graduates.

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service and support of the programme and its development.

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