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Sent by email to c.clewley@imperial.ac.uk

15 April 2020

Dear Dr Clewley,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MSc in Physics and MSc Compound Semiconductor Physics.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in 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](#).

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 students enjoy having a wide range of modules to choose from in the MSc Physics programme.
3. The core modules appear to be of an excellent standard and prepare the MSc students well for independent research.
4. The core courses remain particularly noteworthy in their clear and transparent assessment criteria and well-aligned feedback strategy.
5. The core modules are continually updated and improved after evaluation and according to the needs of the changing student cohort. This responsiveness of the core modules is commendable.
6. The proposed specific open-door hours are a good way of adapting to a growing cohort.
7. The students remain very positive about the MSc course, particularly about the module leads' support and dedication which is unparalleled.
8. The fact that projects are co-negotiated by students early on in the course was viewed very positively by students.



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Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:

1. **Programme Structure:** *Ongoing challenge relating to elective modules which are designed for the undergraduate cohort.*

It remains the long-term plan is to eliminate all Level 6 modules from the diet. This has been delayed due to teaching staff shortages leading to less rapid development of additional Level 7 modules.

2. **Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement:** *Provide students with a list of staff member who they can approach with regard to projects, together with their research areas.*

This has been implemented for 2020/21; a list of abstracts and contact details is made available on Learning Central on day one.

3. **Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement:** *Recommendations on how to prepare MSc students for elective modules:*
 - *Allow students access to elective modules materials as soon as possible.*
 - *Create a prerequisite courses spider diagram: show which courses rely on each other within the UG programme.*
 - *Explicitly list prerequisites for each of the electives that MSc students can take, in terms of knowledge and skills.*
 - *Schedule face to face sessions to support students in choosing options.*

The availability of notes is set by the enrolment process and cannot be circumvented. Students have access to all materials for their elective modules on day one.

A prerequisite course spider diagram is a good idea and will be considered during the course of the upcoming 5 year MSc review.

Prerequisite knowledge and skills are not part of the requirements for SIMS module listings, but this could be incorporated as part of the prerequisite spider diagram, if adopted.

Students already have the option of face-to-face meetings with the course coordinators with respect to module options. These are clearly flagged in induction and repeated during the first two weeks' core module sessions. Querying students' elective module choices are now part of the pre-enrolment contact emails from the DPGS.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar