

Academic & Student Support Services  
Academic Registrar  
Simon Wright LLB  
*Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr*  
*Cofrestrydd Academaidd*  
*Simon Wright LLB*



**Sent by email to [jane.downes@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:jane.downes@uhi.ac.uk)**

**05 April 2016**

Dear Professor Downes,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BA/BSc in Archaeology / BA in Archaeology & another subject / BSc in Conservation of Objects (British, European & Mediterranean Prehistory, History & Theory of Archaeology, Materials Science).

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 detailed observations on, and suggested enhancements to, the nature of feedback provided to students;
2. your detailed observations on marking and suggestion that "more consistency could be achieved by paying closer attention to marking criteria in relation to written feedback";
3. your indication that "the process of agreeing marks through internal moderation was not clear in many places".

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

1. New Undergraduate Feedback Forms have been introduced. All feedback now include a 'feedforward' element, which explicitly addresses how students might improve in their future assessment.

The tick-boxes on feedback forms are used as an adjunct to more extensive written feedback. These tick-boxes are used to identify areas of strength, competency, and deficiencies. If any element of work is marked as 'Deficient', then some explanation of this judgment must be provided in the comments space.

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 0DE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

*Prifysgol Caerdydd*  
*Tŷ McKenzie*  
*30-36 Heol Casnewydd*  
*Caerdydd CF24 0DE*  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.caerdydd.ac.uk](http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk)

2. New Undergraduate Marking Criteria have been developed by the School in response to the University requirement to implement criteria-referenced marking framework. These criteria include Approach to Question, Knowledge and Understanding, Quality of Argument and Conclusions, Use of Evidence and Scholarship, Organisation, Style and Presentation.
3. New School wide moderation forms are being developed for 2015/6. These will record all moderation process undertaken.

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process
2. your particular commendation of the “practice of teaching and assessing on a modular basis practical skills such as illustration and photography”. The School considers practical skills to be a key part of archaeology, providing excellent transferable and employability skills in addition to diversifying the methods of assessment to account for different learning styles.

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

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 0DE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

Prifysgol Caerdydd  
Tŷ McKenzie  
30-36 Heol Casnewydd  
Caerdydd CF24 0DE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.caerdydd.ac.uk](http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk)