



Academic & Student Support Services
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Sent by email to s.watt@bangor.ac.uk

01 August 2016

Dear Dr Watt,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2015–2016

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BSc in Psychology / Psychology with Professional Placement and the Graduate Diploma in Psychology.

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.

Issues Highlighted

1. Your reference to the impact that the use of open notes may have on compressing exam marks.
2. Your concerns (already expressed within the School) regarding limited central University provision of statistical analyses (including exam/module/question-by-question performance).

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

1. The School has now put in place formal tutorials for the next academic year that will advise and illustrate to students the best way in which to make use of open notes and lecture recording to aid in revision and learning.

Your Report draws attention to wider potential issues of compression in exam grades. This was discussed extensively with other external examiners at the Post Exam Board meeting and at a subsequent Board of Studies meeting, and the School has now revised its marking scale to encourage greater use of grades at the top end of the scale. Thus, the School has reduced the marks at the top range to three grades 75, 85 and 95. The School will also introduce for 2016/2017, one-to-one personal feedback sessions with students for coursework essays and small group feedback sessions for practical reports. This has been adopted in order to ensure that students engage fully with the feedback process.

2. The usual range of University-supplied Business Objects reports were unavailable this year owing to technical difficulties affecting the final year of the Programme. The range of University-provided reports and provision of statistical information is continually being reviewed and the School will continue to liaise with the University to ensure all issues are understood.

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 encouragement for the School to continue and expand the use of open-ended exam questions, a strategy designed to allow students to demonstrate the higher-order cognitive skills typical of a first class mark;
3. your particular commendation of the Professional Placement element, of the School's positive response to suggestions outlined in your previous Report and of the School's analysis of the performance of individual modules and assessments, and of the Programme as a whole.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we 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 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