

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - BScEcon Single & Combined Politics programme / BScEcon European Union Studies / BA Joint Politics**

Dear Dr Hogwood,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of European Languages, Translation and Politics 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

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School.

- 1. [3, second para] your “concern about the consistency of assessment workloads and the weightings of assessments between modules” and related observations and recommendation;**
- 2. [3, second para] your indication that “there are wide discrepancies in the module assessment weighting of the same two-question exam format” and that this “degree of variation in the weighting of the same assessment is of concern”;**
- 3. [3, “Marking scheme and second-marking” and 7, final para] in the context of the indication that “second-marking procedures are being carried out assiduously”, your suggested further enhancement of the consistent implementation of double-marking across “all teaching staff”, of the legibility of “all feedback and scrutiny comments” and of the provision of justifications to support agreed marks “in order to guarantee transparency and a consistent audit record”.**

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

*“The Politics Department welcomes Prof Hogwood's many positive and kind comments about our work in this report and throughout her tenure with us. She has been a fantastic colleague through this process and a real pleasure to work with. We also welcome the helpful comments concerning possible issues for consideration.*

*1. & 2. Assessment variation (workload and weighting): The Politics Department ensured that all modules are consistent with the University Registry guidance about typical workload for 20 credit modules provided in 'Guidance on the Nature and Volume of Assessment'. However, this guidance allows some degree of variation on these issues and Politics modules reflect this legitimate variation. However, in light of Prof Hogwood's comments and in response to conversation with Prof Hogwood, the Politics Department has set up a working group to look at the benefits of developing a more closely harmonised approach in Politics modules that would limit the variation even further. This will report in the Spring Semester for departmental consideration and implementation for next academic year.*

*3. Double marking in the form of moderation is in place for all Politics modules, although Prof Hogwood's comment makes it clear that formally documenting where this has taken place could be improved. We intend to improve our internal marking guidance to staff to reflect this, to formally record that moderation has taken place and to ensure that external examiners have this clearly indicated to them.*

*Legibility of feedback comments is being targeted by the School implementation of an electronic marking pilot using Grademark through Turnitin. In addition, all staff are*

*encouraged to type feedback where possible and reminded about legibility where not currently. The assessment working group will address the issue of assuring legibility through by having all comments electronically.*

*The Politics Department's policy is that justifications for the particular resolutions of internally disputed marks are provided to external examiners. Conversations with Prof Hogwood indicated that sometimes this was not being done automatically, and that some justifications had to be requested. Improvement to marking guidance for all markers, coupled with briefings on what is expected, will ensure improvement here, as will providing both markers and administrative support staff with a checklist of tasks to be concluded before scripts are sent to external examiners with evidence of task completion where required."*

Your comments (at 3. Under Recommendations re assessment methods") on the scheduling of examinations have been referred to Registry colleagues involved in examination timetabling.

### Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[2] particular commendation of "the very high standards of student performance" and "Standards of tuition evidenced student support";**
- c. **[3 and 7] detailed positive perceptions on individual elements of the programme and of "innovation in the design of assessments" and confirmation that the recent "modernisation of the curriculum content has helped the School's teaching provision to keep pace with a fast-moving literature and real-world developments, and...to retain a competitive edge"**
- d. **[3] commendation of plans to "pilot online submission of coursework".**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

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 Registry web pages and will be available publically.

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.

Mrs Jill Bedford  
Director of Registry and Academic Services