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Sent by email to cath.osullivan@imperial.ac.uk

14 August 2017

Dear Dr O'Sullivan

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2016–2017

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for MSc Structural Engineering; Civil Engineering; Civil and Water Engineering; Civil and Geoenvironmental Engineering.

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. Use of guest lecturers in some modules.
2. Availability of group work opportunities.
3. Students cannot start their dissertations until they pass the taught stage of the programme.
4. An irregularity with one of the examinations (missing scripts).
5. Provision of module averages and maximum and minimum marks and of case study reports in advance.

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

1. The School endeavours to utilise guest lecturers on most of our modules, appreciates that they provide an important industrial perspective to students

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and staff alike and will continue to encourage staff to utilise guest lectures as appropriate.

2. Group work is available in only a few modules at present. However, the matter has already been raised in a recent Board of Studies and meeting means of incorporating additional group and design work will be investigated in the coming academic year.
3. The School has signalled its intention to henceforth permit students to begin supervised or unsupervised preparatory work on the Dissertation prior to completion of the Postgraduate Diploma Stage as this is permitted via Senate Regulations with the Head of School's permission.
4. Registry confirmed that the missing scripts was a breakdown of their procedures and letters of apology were issued to all affected students. The School has been assured that processes are in place to prevent this occurrence happening again. Furthermore, receipt of scripts by the School of Engineering will also now check that the expected number of scripts have been received prior to allocation to the exam marking team.
5. These will be provided for next year.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. positive student perceptions of the programme and of support provided by lecturers.

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,

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