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Sent by email to a.j.allan@exeter.ac.uk

28 September 2017

Dear Dr Allan,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MSc in Education, Policy and Society and MSc Childhood and Youth.

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 Highlighted

Reiterated observations of variability in feedback provided to students and related comments.

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

Ensuring the quality of feedback to students in terms of breadth and depth is a perennial issue. It is addressed and revisited by the School's teaching & learning team who develop detailed guidelines and matrices in accordance with the University's policy, and which staff are prompted to implement. Stressing the importance of informative feedback to students remains on the School's agenda, but imposing a word count is (a) technically impossible to enforce (Grade Mark is used and does not have a word-count option) and (b) questionable on grounds that quantity does not guarantee quality. The School takes on board your comments and

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will continue to stress to teaching teams the importance of qualitative consistency and transparency in the provision of feedback to students (including moderation forms).

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. an exciting and contemporary programme bringing together theory, practice, policy and empirical research;
3. some exemplary assessment feedback (particularly on the Childhood modules);
4. interesting arrangement of workshop sessions in some of the modules (e.g. Childhood policy module, which also includes some interesting talks from outside speakers)
5. thorough preparation for assessment (including interesting formative work and high expectations for reading and engagement in seminars)
6. many modules are international in their focus.

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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