

Sent by email to a.j.rothwell@swansea.ac.uk

04 August 2015

Dear Professor Rothwell,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Reports 2014 – 2015

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Reports for the BA in Translation and for the MA in Translation Studies.

Your Reports have 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. The issue of module marks ending in 9 and the effect that they can have in the application of your secondary classification rule in respect of borderline candidates (BA in Translation);
2. Consideration of a consistent policy on electronic marking and feedback (MA in Translation Studies);
3. Exploring the possibility of sending all work to the External Examiner via electronic mechanisms (MA in Translation Studies);
4. More explicit assessment criteria to be written for the ATP exercise (MA in Translation Studies) along with a standard report form that reflects the assessment criteria;

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

1. We intend to address the problem at School level in the coming academic year. We tried to follow Prof. Rothwell's earlier advice against borderline marks by avoiding marks ending in 9 for individual assignments, although we recognize that despite this new practice an overall module mark may still be a borderline mark. At the moment the overall mark calculation is not available until shortly before exam boards, which makes it difficult to identify borderline cases in advance, particularly for modules with several component marks of various weightings. As mentioned earlier, a general School solution to the problem will be sought in the course of the year. If no School-wide solution is implemented, we shall attempt to explore viable alternative possibilities at departmental level.
2. A minority of tutors have started using Grademark this year, the general consensus is that it is a rather unstable platform that in many cases seems to make the process of marking more laborious rather than more streamlined, so we are unlikely to see further implementation of online marking for MA modules this coming year. However

further discussion of alternative options for electronic marking will continue in the Teaching and Learning committee.

3. All sample assessments, scripts and marking documents will be scanned and sent to the external electronically to facilitate communication and avoid possible losses.
4. We are happy to implement rigorous criteria this coming year. In 2014-15 we revised the guidelines for students for the ATP to make more explicit the need to underpin the discussion of translation choices in the commentary with reference to relevant theories. This is in line with a more general move towards the integration of theory and practice across the programme (as evidenced by a new module Translation as Creative Practice) and we are keen to take it through to the level of assessment by developing a revised set of criteria and a new and more comprehensive marking sheet.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. The quality and rigour of the assessment processes for the BA in Translation, and the detailed engagement and dialogue with students' writing (including on exam scripts, which the students never see).
3. The programme is distinctive in its ability to accommodate students with a very wide range of language combinations;
4. The detailed and careful marking, and high quality of feedback to students, which is exemplary;
5. Your commendation of the design of the practical translation modules, the Training Placement, and the Subtitling module, which give the MA a distinctive professional focus;

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme 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 Student Intranet 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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