Sent by email to Professor Fiona Polack

05 November 2019

Dear Prof Polack,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for undergraduate programmes in the School of Computer Sciences.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their Annual Review and Enhancement process and where appropriate, Periodic Review.

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 team-based approach to teaching on the software engineering degree continues to be particularly impressive.
3. Improvement on the disparity between achievement in modules and achievement in reflective elements such as project and placement reports.
4. Proposals to revise moderation, to include guidelines on challenge and proposals that would enable sharing of best practice are excellent and should be taken forward.
5. Staff have taken external examiner comments very seriously, and there is a clear intention to continue to improve procedures.
6. The placement year assessment, with its focus on self-reflection and cumulative learning.

Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:

1. **Assessment Process:** Review of projects was hampered by the very minimal commentary that accompanies marks and resolutions; the project marking process needs some clear guidelines.

    The working group looking at projects continues to look at this aspect as part of its remit. Changes were not able to be made to the project marking scheme in time for 18/19 due to the timing of the group's recommendations and the technical work required to change the Project Allocation and Tracking System (PATS).

    Staff have been provided with guidance on how much information should be provided in final year project marking, but it seems that this is not being followed in all cases. The working group will look at changes needed to PATS to make this clearer to see if this can be improved for the coming academic year.

2. **Assessment Process:** Anonymity of border line cases at exam boards.

    Borderline cases are not dealt with at exam boards, these are covered by processes set in the Academic Regulations, and the exam board process (including the format of the exam board reports) is governed by the University, not the School. One of the key functions of the exam board is to check for errors, and anonymity hinders this process.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and 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's Public Information website and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar