

Academic & Student Support Services  
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Sent by email to [a.macadam@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:a.macadam@brighton.ac.uk)

23 November 2015

Dear Dr MacAdam,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2014 – 2015**

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MSc in Pharmacy Clinical Practice.

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:**

1. Your indication of a potential issue around the use of negative marking on the MCQ papers.

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

1. The management committee has decided to take a phased approach to changing the structure and content of the class test.

In 2015/16 – Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) will remain in the class test, but the negative marking will be removed. A correct answer will be awarded a mark of 1 and an incorrect answer zero. This does not require any changes to the schedule of assessment since this level of detail is not stipulated in the regulations. For each of the three modules, there are 10 MCQs (mark out of 10) plus one case study (mark out of 20). The performance in the MCQs will be reviewed against previous years to see whether or not this makes a difference to the number of questions attempted and final marks. It has been noted that the negative marking in this section of the class test paper may encourage students to be more ready to guess the answers on the other case study sections where there is no negative marking. This of course, goes against the ethos of our profession and in view of our recent discussions about 'red flags' and 'yellow flags', the removal of negative marking is more in line with this approach.

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In 2016/17 – the MCQs will be removed from the class test and the case study will be expanded to 30 marks to incorporate the knowledge base of the written assessment. This provides ample opportunity for students to be given examples of case study questions in preparation for the new structure of the class test at the end of the academic 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. Your commendation of the programme team's response to your feedback and that provided by students, of the weekend schools fostering excellent peer support and of the organisation of your engagement with the Programme.

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

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service 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 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,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar