

Academic & Student Support Services
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Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to c.r.hajarnavis@warwick.ac.uk

08 March 2016

Dear Professor Hajarnavis,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the Pure Mathematics modules on undergraduate programmes.

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(s) Highlighted:

1. your comments regarding the further broadening of the BSc and MMath programmes;
2. your comments on scaling and on moves the School is making to use Examining Boards to review modules and their assessment in more detail;
3. your comments on the usefulness of internal examiners writing comments on projects in the margins;
4. your detailed observations and suggestion regarding the length of projects;
5. your observations regarding the performance of third year MMath students relative to earlier cohorts.

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

1. The School has confirmed that it is making adjustments to the "Algebra Stream" with Group Theory being introduced in level 4 and subsequent modules being developed. For example, a level 5 Group Theory module has been introduced and an Abstract Algebra module is being planned for level 6. These modules will evolve as the various cohorts of students progress through the degree programme. A similar review has taken place regarding year 4, and the School is looking to enhance the breadth of modules available whilst also taking in to account the resource implications across all degree programmes. To support the expansion in this area, the School has recently made two new appointments in Algebra/Topology.

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2. The School has confirmed that, working within University guidelines, the effect of scaling examinations on borderline candidates will be carefully considered in Examining Board meetings. The School's move towards formative coursework will also help to in this regard as overall module marks will (in most cases) be determined directly by examination performance.
3. The School has confirmed that there is no School policy restricting internal examiners from writing on project reports and that your appreciation of such comments will be highlighted to staff in appropriate School meetings.
4. The following information is an extract from hand-outs provided to all students and project supervisors detailing the suggested length of a project report.

A typical double project (20 credit) report would normally consist of about 30+ 1.5 spaced A4 pages (40+ pages MMATH), excluding appendices and diagrams, but you should discuss the appropriate length of your report with your supervisor. A 20 credit project report that is longer than 60 pages (100 pages MMATH) excluding appendices will not normally be acceptable unless the supervisor agrees that the subject matter merits this.

5. The School has noted that the results of students entering level 7 of the MMath programme are lower than the previous cohorts. All students will be informed of the support available from module leaders and project supervisors

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 particular commendation of the standard of examination papers and of the administrative support you received from the School.

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.

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Yours sincerely,



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