

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MA in Social Work**

Dear Ms Price,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of Social Sciences 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.

### Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

**“1. The External Examiner's perception that “there could be a stronger ‘critical’ element to the taught material”:**

*This comment will be considered by the MA Social Work Board of Studies and by the programme module teams. It will also be shared with both the other existing External Examiner and the incoming one. The perspectives of each of these will be collated and presented to the subsequent programme Board of Studies in order that they may be used as appropriate to strengthen programme material.*

**2. The External Examiner's indication that “the arrangements for students exiting the award need to be reconsidered” and related comments:**

*The MA Social Work is a two year, full time programme of study. Successful completion of all elements leads to the award of MA Social Work. This is both an academic award and the professional licence to practice as a qualified social worker in the UK. Where a student successfully completes all elements but achieves a mark of 40-49% (rather than the M level pass mark of 50%) for their dissertation only, they may exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work. This is both an academic award and is recognised as a professional licence to practice as a qualified social worker in the UK. However, there is currently no exit award provision for a student who has either:*

- (i) Successfully completed all Year I and Year II university-based elements of the MASW at 50%+ but not passed the Year II professional practice learning element or*
- (ii) Successfully completed all Year I university-based elements at 50%+ and has passed the Year I professional practice learning element but does not wish to continue to Year II.*

*This is what Ms Price is referring to. The MA Social Work is a non-modular programme in the sense that its component modules are not credit-rated. However, in accordance with the programme approval requirements of the professional regulatory body for social work (the Care Council for Wales), each of Years I and II of the MASW comprise 100 days university-based learning and 100 days professional practice learning. A ‘day’ is taken as 7.5 hours. Working to the formula of 100 hours of learning = 10 credits, it is apparent that in Year I students complete the equivalent of 750 hours of university-based learning (or 70+ credits) and 750 hours of professional practice learning (or 70+ credits). In Year II students also complete the equivalent of 750 hours of university-based learning (or 70+ credits) and 750 hours of professional practice learning (or 70+ credits). With this calculation in mind, a case may be developed for the award of Postgraduate certificate for the successful completion of Year I and Postgraduate Diploma for the successful completion of Year I and the university-based element of Year II. Neither award, however, would constitute a professional licence to practice as a qualified social*

*worker. It is the intention of the MASW to put forward such a case for consideration by the Registry during the 2013-14 session.”*

### Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[6] your commendation, of “processes for internal moderation” and of the feedback provided to students;**
- c. **[7] your positive concluding remarks on the integration of theory and practice, opportunities for practice related research, support for dissertations and programme organisation.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

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 Registry web pages and will be available publically.

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.

Mrs Jill Bedford  
Director of Registry and Academic Services