

Academic & Student Support Services
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Simon Wright LLB
Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr
Cofrestrydd Academaidd
Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to a.dilley@bsms.ac.uk

07 July 2015

Dear Dr Dilley,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BDS (Hons) in Dentistry (Primary BDS Part 1 - Anatomy).

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. The location of the learning outcomes for each teaching session as they were not part of the year one handbook;
2. Observations that there were very few high scoring essays, which may reflect difficulty in allocating marks for the listed criteria;
3. Observations that some of the borderline students were passing the module by doing well in one or two areas only and the 40% pass mark for each component;
4. Clarity on the purpose and assessment of the reflective statement;
5. Difficulties recording marks on the Student Information Management System (SIMS)

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

1. The learning outcomes are provided separately to the handbook mainly for accessibility and to make it more likely that the students do indeed read the learning outcomes for the programme;
2. We take on board the comments with respect to the essay marking criteria and rewarding students at the higher end. We recently amended the mark scheme to add rigour to the process it maybe at the higher end it is too rigorous for level 4 and over the summer we will look at the criteria again in order to address the point made by the External Examiner. With respect to breakdown of marks for the essays, currently we do provide outline answers for all questions for scrutiny by external examiners and try to give an indication of what is expected from the students in future we will attempt to make this more transparent. We are more than happy to take on board comments of external examiners with respect to questions scrutinised and do amend questions when concerns are raised and did so this year. We will

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endeavour in future to act on comments from the external examiners and more importantly confirm with them changes that have been made upon request;

3. The pass mark for components is set at 40% in line with honours degree programmes, in order to maintain an element of rigour we do not allow compensation between element so coursework components and examinations etc, which is often seen in modular programmes. Whilst there were a limited number of borderline students who did well in some sections and poorly on others in the examinations they did show knowledge of these topics in other components. We will endeavour to look at the standards in future to address this slight concern raised. With respect to weak students needing guidance to answer short questions this is provided in feedback sessions for ICA's, but some students choose to ignore it;
4. The coursework element (leaflet) will be looked at in future and more emphasis will be placed on the reflective element of the assessment in the criteria. The instructions given to the students were clear that the work should be presented to the lay person. The reflective statement is a research trail where they can show how they came by there material and reflect on why they used material they did and disregarded other material and as such can show their aptitude in sifting through some complex material which is not always evident from the leaflet itself;
5. The University will work with the School to try to resolve the difficulties associated with the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

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 extent of material covered in the assessments and the depth anatomical knowledge that was examined;

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for you 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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