

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - PG Certificate/PG Diploma/MSc in Clinical Optometry (Professional Development)

Dear Dr MacMillan,

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 Optometry and Vision 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.

1. **[1] your encouragement for the release of full information on course content "at the start of the module rather than staggered over time";**
2. **[3] your indication that you had "not had access to marking criteria or marking schemes";**
3. **[3] your further indications of "the need for a process of second marking a sample of assessments" and for arrangements for "the anonymity of students' work";**
4. **[6.1-6.4] your detailed suggested enhancements "for future practical days".**

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

"Thank you for your help throughout the year reviewing exam scripts, coursework, exam results and papers. We value your input and are pleased that you found the assessment process to be accurate and fair.

In response to points raised in your report:

We are delighted that you thought that there had been 'a huge leap forward in the organisation and administration of the programme' and that you were pleased with the programme structure, quality of lectures and course content. As you know, we have appointed external clinical experts from hospitals to the team and staff implemented a lot of changes to the programme. Having worked very hard over the last year to ensure that the programme provides an excellent student experience and high quality teaching, it is very good to know that you consider that the efforts have paid off.

As you outline, there are a number of ways that we could improve the programme further. These were discussed at the Board of Studies and it was agreed to implement them over the next year. For example, content will be released at the start of the module rather than staggered over time.

The feedback from your attendance at the practical sessions was particularly helpful and in future we have agreed that we will:

- *allow the students an opportunity to reveal their understanding of practical sessions at the beginning;*
- *provide a student workbook;*
- *have a facilitator led debrief for the whole student group; and*
- *issue a student feedback questionnaire about the practical day at the end of the day as well as at the end of the module.*

You raised points about access to marking criteria and marking schemes, second marking assessments and for the arrangements for the anonymity of students' when marking. Just to clarify, you have access to all marking schemes for exams (practical and online). The majority of written exams are online MCQs and are marked automatically and anonymity and second marking is not an issue. Second marking is the norm in practical assessments. Therefore, it is our understanding that the issues you referred to relate to coursework and not exams. We agreed that we will develop transparent marking criteria for all coursework and double mark 10% of all coursework anonymously including all fails and all borderline cases.

Once again thank you for your advice as one of our external examiners and we look forward to working with you again in the next academic year."

Positive Comments

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

- a. **[1] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, quality of lectures and course content;**
- b. **[6] your positive perceptions on the engagement of "experts in hospital services" and on the range of delivery methods.**

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