

Academic & Student Support Services
Academic Registrar
Simon Wright LLB
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Cofrestrydd Academaidd
Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to ib50@le.ac.uk

10 December 2015

Dear Dr Barber,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BSc in Biology, BSc in Ecology and BSc in Zoology (Animal Biology / Ecology / Evolution).

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 encouragement for consideration of extending the electronic submission of coursework;
2. Your observation of a skew in the popularity of questions being set in some modules and questions related to applied aspects of modules are unpopular;
3. Your reiterated observation of a poor levels of referencing across many modules and related comments.

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

1. This academic year the School has instituted a policy of all coursework being submitted electronically wherever practicable, and expects that the vast majority of work to be submitted this way. Several elements of coursework were marked electronically in 2014/15 and before, however this will be expanded markedly for 2015/16 and beyond. The Final Year project will be a hardcopy submission for 2015/16, but electronic submission after that.
2. The School is trying to identify those areas of modules that have more-skewed answers to questions and to suggest ways of supporting students in the less-popular areas. These highlighted areas suggested for exam questions will again be encouraged for this coming academic year's exams.

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3. Scientific writing skills are now a much higher component of Year 1 assessments, and the Final Year students in 2015/16 will have gone through this new regiment. The School therefore hopes that their skills will be much improved. Students are introduced to Endnote in Year 1, and again in Year 2 and the School will reinforce the value of such software again to Final Year students.

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 on efforts made to improve the standard of presentation of scientific data by students;
3. Your positive comments regarding a greater use of the upper end of the mark range and the extensive annotation of exam scripts and coursework, of the detailed criteria for ascribing particular marks, and of the helpful and instructive feedback provided to students;
4. Your identification of innovative and challenging coursework and commendation of the use of detailed and substantial coursework briefs in many modules;

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar