

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



**Sent by email to [sukanya.sengupta@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:sukanya.sengupta@rhul.ac.uk)**

**08 March 2016**

Dear Professor Sen Gupta,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MBA (Management, Employment and Organisation).

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 observations and queries in respect of the programme structure and delivery;
2. your particular queries regarding the class test for BST521;
3. your request for clarification of the means of delivering BST531;
4. your further request for clarification of the delivery of, and contact hours associated with BST609, BST610 and BST607;
5. your request for greater consistency in information provided to you for each module and for clarity "as to how representative the samples [you received were] for the entire population";
6. your enquiry regarding generic assessment criteria and the availability of "a universal template or assessment guideline offered that would cut across different modules";
7. your indication that it "would have been useful to have a fail in the sample alongside the distinctions and firsts so as to provide an overview of dissertations across the key categories";
8. your concerns regarding turnaround times.

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

1. The School thanks you for your comments relating to the programme structure and has confirmed that the "organisation of much of the teaching on the MBA follows a conventional 'Harvard' format with theoretical aspects

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 0DE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

*Prifysgol Caerdydd*  
*Tŷ McKenzie*  
*30-36 Heol Casnewydd*  
*Caerdydd CF24 0DE*  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.caerdydd.ac.uk](http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk)

covered in lectures which are followed by small group sessions based around case studies designed to illustrate the practical application. The 6 hours of small group work is typically made up of 3 sessions of 2 hours.

Whilst the School is clear on the purpose of the current teaching methods it would appear that the module descriptions could be refined to ensure that this is made clearer to outsiders.”

2. The School has confirmed that the ”purpose of the one hour class test is to prepare the students for the integrated case study only part of which is HR related” and that the examination covers different material. The duration of the class test was indicated in materials you received as “n/a” in error and the School apologises for this.
3. The same format is followed for all elective modules. There are 8 weeks of three hour lectures and there no syndicates. It would appear therefore that this module description is incorrect and this will be revised accordingly. The School will also correct the duplicate references in the module descriptor and thanks you for highlighting these inconsistencies.
4. These modules are part of the Executive MBA which is a part time programme run over two years. Each module is taught over 3 full days with students attending from 9am to 5pm each day (including a lunch break). This results in 21 contact hours per 10 credit module.
5. The School thanks you for raising this issue and is in the process of guidance for markers to achieve more consistency across modules. The School is currently proposing changes to the methods of assessment (length of assignment / examination) for a number of modules which will also help move in the direction of greater consistency. At the end of last year, four modules with higher failure rates were identified and those module leaders undertook to consider possible reasons for the abnormal results and to institute changes to materials taught and/or assessed where necessary. The School apologises for the lack of clarity regarding the representativeness of the sample and has confirmed that staff are given clear instructions about how the samples should be extracted.
6. The University has developed a generic set of assessment criteria that have been distributed to all staff in the School. The MBA programme team will use this as a starting point of discussions about standards to facilitate shared expectations amongst staff across different modules.
7. On this occasion there were no fails amongst students submitting dissertations in the MEO subject areas.

8. The School will make more effort to have the material delivered to you in a more timely fashion in future and apologises for the inconvenience caused to you last year.

Your indication that there was a lack of clarity in the formal University reporting requirements has been noted. The University issues External Examiner report packs (including the report template, associated guidelines and fee and expenses claim form) are issued by my office to External Examiners in May each year, in advance of the Examining Board. Please accept my apologies if you did not receive the pack last year.

**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 level of detail provided in feedback to students.

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.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar