

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2018/19 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Year Leader/Course Director please ensure you reflect on External Examiners' comments in the Course Review section. Please ensure that any actions to be taken in response to these comments have been recorded in your Annual Quality Improvement Report.

For support or advice please contact Ana Filipovic, Academic Quality Officer 'Standards',

Question

External Examiners comment

<p>2.2 Quality of cand knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range</p>	<p>marks were noticeably better than Section B. In all programmes, mean marks may be noticeably lower for some modules. There will be a number of possible reasons for these variations in quality of performance, so long-term analysis of patterns across several examination diets and student cohorts is recommended to identify causes, consequences and potential remedies for these variations.</p> <p>The Gateway Programme examiners noted that the spread of marks was right or left skewed in some questions. For example, IGE and AH1 were left skewed, indicating that there were quite a few students who struggled with these modules. The problem may be attributable to the simple arithmetic requirements in these questions. On the other hand, TMA was right skewed, with average mark for TMA1 of 66%; this question was not dependent on arithmetical ability. Our interpretation is that the arithmetical issue is a problem that needs to be solved as it evidently disadvantages some students. One simple solution may be to change the order of questions on the exam paper, and not placing all the arithmetical questions together as a panic-inducing block. In discussion with the Gateway examiners it was apparent that this problem was not specific to the Gateway students and the same trends could be seen in BSc1 answers. On the whole, there was no statistical difference between the Gateway and BSc1 marks.</p>	<p>We are aware of some students finding arithmetic more challenging and our Learning Technology team are developing online tutorial material using authentic and relevant (laboratory/field) problems to work through different types of calculations. It is hoped that this will be offered to all students entering the programme in 2020 with a pilot version for 2019 entry. Great emphasis is put on the importance of calculations and several directed learning sessions (small group problem solving) are focused around the sorts of problems students may encounter when conducting laboratory or field experiments. Additionally there is a workshop dedicated to calculations in first year and there is a recap session in second year, as well as one to one (or small group) support available for all students via our Education Development team. For 2018-19 we have moved to two examination periods and will encourage students to reflect on their first exams in January and seek help and advice from ED before undertaking their term two module exams and research projects in term three</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Course Director to liaise with Learning Technology team, Education Development team and tutorial leads to ensure that students have opportunity to discuss and develop their numeracy skills. Gateway, first, second, third year leaders to encourage students to reflect on exam performance and seek help from ED before the start of the second examination period</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Jun-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p>	<p>Ongoing. There continue to be timetabled opportunities to develop numeracy and Learning Support team are aware of the short software was not purchased in the last budget will be applied for 2020-21</p>
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Course Director, year leaders, tutorial
leads

is little indication that even the best-performing students demonstrate this (few if any make reference to academic literature or coverage beyond the lectures). If the essay is testing for ability to present a cogent and well-reasoned argument, then a single essay in a single examination sitting could be sufficient, although arguably a project report or dissertation would be a fairer, more rigorous and more authentic form of assessment to test this ability.

Another area of concern we have about essays is the marking load associated with them and the rigour with which the common grading scheme for essays is applied. We would suggest that programme committees and/or the Learning and Teaching Committee/Academic Board (or equivalent) review the modular and programme schemes of assessment with particular focus on the essay question format, its purpose/rationale, the practicalities of marking essays in massive volume, and appropriate facilitating/protective systems for ensuring sustained fairness and rigour in the setting and marking of essay questions (see 3.2 below).

		Course director; exams officers; chair of exam board	
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3.5 In your view, are the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External Examiners)

load which may not be appropriate or academically justified; an increasing staff burden of assessment; and

<p>4.4 I was able to scrutinise an adequate and marks to enable me to carry out my duties</p>	<p>We would ask you to note that the volume of written work that needs to be sampled has increased markedly in the last three years and that a more stream-lined approach would aid the examiners working in the short time-frame of their visit. For example, bundles of scripts could be pre-prepared with samples from high-medium- and low-performing candidates already selected and identified. IT access continued to be a major limiting factor for us this year. We request that dedicated, secure computers, with log-in done in advance, are available for us to review all on-line materials. For the BSc programmes, exam scripts and projects were available but the full-range of in-course assessments was not available.</p>	<p>Action Deadline: 01-May-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to: exams officers; course support</p> <p>We appreciate the huge volume of documents that need to be sampled by the External Examiners in a short space of time, and are very grateful for your tireless work. We will endeavor to ensure that high - medium - low scripts and ICA are made readily available either in paper or electronic format and that there are enough computers available and accessible for you to carry out the sampling. In general, the Exams Office does not give External Examiners a batch/sample of scripts, instead they are provided with a range of scripts</p> <p>Action Required: Exams office to work with course support and IT to ensure access for External Examiners during the visit. To make available online course work and projects as well as low - medium and highly marked scripts from each question / module exam</p> <p>Action Deadline: 01-Jun-2019</p>	
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	<p>could be more clearly articulated.</p> <p>The induction day(s) for new external examiners could be improved by an indication of if/how it wishes them to contribute at all stages of the assessment process. At the exam paper review stage we spend much time correcting errors or ambiguities that should be picked up earlier. During the time-constrained visit days, we are confronted by a large assemblage of exam scripts with little or no commentary. The development of an</p> <p>very helpful.</p> <p>As noted previously, we would value printed module descriptors, learning objectives and lecture lists being available during our visit (and ideally mailed or link emailed prior earlier in the academic session)</p>	<p>approval at the relevant academic committee</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Jun-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>course director, academic registrar, director of assessment</p>	
<p>4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)</p>	<p>See linked question 4.9 above</p>	<p>Course director will look into the possibility of clear guidelines for the role of the External Examiners with the Academic Registrar and Director of Assessment</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Course Director to discuss the development of an External Examiner handbook with the Academic Registrar and the Director of Assessment, for approval at the relevant academic committee</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Jun-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>course director; academic registrar; director of assessment</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 16-Jul-

BSc in Bioveterinary Sciences, 2018/19

ACTION; **Course Director, Year Leaders,**



Module Leaders and Year Leaders to ensure that all examination questions are mapped to specific learning objectives. (Deadline: April 2020).

We note that course leaders have offered directed learning sessions to support students with this element of the assessment, and not

knowledge of the area. There are some modules where the true value of these are displayed and PSQs which tend to focus only on knowledge recall are easily identified as consistently giving higher marks in comparison to

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

There have been substantial and positive changes to the assessment methods for 2018.19.

For Gateway/ BSc1 /BSc 2 - The removal of essay style questions for gateway/ BSc1 /BSc 2 now brings the programmes in line with other Russell Group courses. Testing for integration and synthesis of knowledge plus demonstration of extensive study beyond the syllabus of lectures is now fulfilled only by in course assessment, e.g. report writing. As already noted, the examiners feel that this must have been of benefit to staff assessment time, and we would imagine that students will find the short answer / MCQ styles to be a more rigorous test of their knowledge. It would be good if the impact of these changes were to be assessed in some way. Certainly

College response:

a. We would like to thank the External Examiners for positive comments about the recent changes made to the assessment diet for Gateway/BSc1/2 and will endeavour to provide some analysis from the Departmental Teaching Coordinators regarding staff time (as above) and academic achievement between modules/years of study (as above)

In all programmes, there is a good range of assessment procedures; this variety provides students with a number of ways to demonstrate knowledge and learning, and there is no reliance on a single method of assessment. The balance between in-course assessments and formal written examinations in modules is broadly consistent across programmes and is in line with wider practice in the sector.

In BSci 3 EMS - As mentioned before, including assessed teaching material and LOs in model answers is

c. Thank you for highlighting that there are several different formats for marking style and feedback between different pieces of work. Highlighted elsewhere in this report for some pieces of work there is now a prompt for markers to give clear written

not been adopted across the board but could be investigated further (**Module Leaders, Year eaders**)

The YR3 project dissertation double marking is to be commended, as this is a serious time commitment, however it was troubling that such large discrepancies could exist between the two markers. There was ~9-10 projects that had a 20%+ difference in marker one vs marker two. A simple agreement in this case is not fair on the student as it likely leads to a middle point being picked. It might be worth considering a sliding scale, where by up to a 10% difference can be rectified between examiners. However, 10%+ difference would benefit from a third marker as there would a clear difference in the fundamental scientific opinion of the two examiners at this gap. I understand there is a moderation procedure in place, however it may not be fair on the staff involved or the

Some module leaders were not present at the board meeting which, while probably inevitable, did partially disabled a full immediate dis

4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Answer = Yes, although some aspects are still in progress and where relevant have been reiterated in this new report.

4.2

4.5 I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.7 The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

No

4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound

Completion

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

5.1 Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

No further comments

5.2 External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are remain confidential, if any)

