

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018/19

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

MSc Wild Animal Biology/Health

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 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', afilipovic@vc.ac.uk, 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2018/19

a. Updates to actions from previous years' reports

Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director/Year Leader's response & Action	Update in 2018/19
1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met	It would be useful to see the learning objectives/ outcomes on the exam papers ie a reference point that the LOs are being met by that particular assessment	Where possible this will be performed for the 2018-19 exams. We shall report on the progress at the next examiners board meeting.	

narrow mark band for merits
which may still affect the
expected distribution of
awards.

MSc in Wild Animal Biology, 2018/19

Lead examiner: Dr Javier Lopez

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Linda Penfold

The Programme

Please comment, as appropriate, on the following aspects of the programme:

1.1 Course content

As in previous years, the course content is adequate for this type and level of course, it is up to date and covers broadly all aspects of the two fields in depth and breadth. Students interviewed on the day of the oral presentations were of the same opinion

Dr L.P

1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met

ought to be able to access everything that they ought to have. Part of the problem though may be not knowing where to look. This will be passed onto the leaders of the research module (Monika Bohm and David Brodbelt) to highlight the joint provision during the research preparation week. Also during a student rep-staff meeting with the 2018-19 cohort, this was brought to the attention of the course directors who requested which extra journals the students wanted access to. Unfortunately there was no feedback to this request. It would be worth surveying the current class.

ACTION POINT: Course Directors to consult with current student reps to check if they are missing access to any particular titles.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations 494.282(th)3(e)6(cour)5(se d)JTJET2T

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Appropriate and relevant to the curriculum; sufficiently varied to assess different skills such as ability to

mark at all (0) when the student's answer was not completely consistent with the model answer. This problem would be corrected by using half marks in these instances.

Course Directors' response: The award classification boundary is set College wide, not course specific, and the move to 70% for a Distinction and the narrowing of the Merit range was discussed fully prior to implementation. The college's Learning and Teaching Committee highlighted that the changes to thresholds for Merit and Distinction were based on modelling previous years' results and were not arbitrary. These changes are across all the PPS MScs and the decision had been made after the longitudinal analysis. The marking and annotation of the SAQs should clearly show how and where marks were awarded, to both sample markers and External Examiners. Staff will be reminded that this is a College requirement and staff members who do not conform will be highlighted to their Head of Department.

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)

The assessment procedures are rigorous, fair and transparent. Meetings of the Board of Examiners are conducted very fairly, and comments of internal and external examiners are fully considered in making decisions. All students were assessed individually on their own merits, and every case was highly considered and discussed so the students should have no concerns that anything than the upmost attention was given to their grade. All information required was available to external examiners to make a good assessment.

3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined

As mentioned above the changes to markers for exams (sample marking) and for research projects have worked well to produce reduce discrepancy between markers and make the process of marking and assessment easier and fairer.

The lowering of the threshold for distinctions has resolved the issue of low numbers of distinctions in previous courses; however the grades are still in a somewhat narrow range, so while there are a couple of low grades there are large amounts of 62-68, and a few 75 and not much higher. We briefly discussed how we might get a wider spread of grades, especially higher grades.

Having an interim meeting before the summer, where the work from the first 4 modules of the course is assessed, has been very helpful by reducing the workload on the two days ahead of the board meeting and more time for careful and fair assessment of the process.

Having a formal debrief of the board just at the beginning of the exam day was useful to the external examiner to remind how the process is going to be and any details / changes from previous year that might be of relevance.

Course Directors' response : We do encourage the examiners to use the full range of scores available from 0 to 100. The interim exam board has certainly taken some of the pressure off September. Thank you for the comments regarding this- we will continue that practice in future years.

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

The opportunity to meet the majority of the students immediately after the student presentations was very valuable. The relevant comments and suggestions made by the students were discussed by the external examiners at the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Course Directors' response: The directors believe that this is good practice and shall continue to provide the opportunity for the external examiners to meet with the students and discuss the course.

4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

