External Examiner - Report

Reference:	EX20856
Name:	Dr Ruth Godfrey
Academic Year:	24/25
Home Institution:	Swansea University
Examining Department:	Chemistry
Course(s):	Transferable Skills in Science | Transferable Skills in Science | Transferable Skills in Science for Postdoctoral Re | Transferable Skills in Science for Postdoctoral Re |
Year of Study:	22/23

Programme Information

Did you receive or have access to:

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
1.1 Programme handbooks, programme specifications, including programme learning outcomes?	Yes	These have been reviewed with the programme team and a list of updates agreed (as out of date and inaccurate) with a timeline of completion	
1.2 Module descriptions including module learning outcomes?	Yes	These have been reviewed with the programme team and a list of updates agreed (as module specifications and handbooks are not aligned) with a timeline of completion	
1.3 Assessment briefs/marking criteria?	Yes	These have been reviewed with the programme team and deemed appropriate	
1.4 Is there any additional information which could have been provided?	Yes	a curriculum map has been discussed with the programme team to show completion of core learning outcomes for the award and certificate.	

Course Content and Design

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
2.1 Are the modules and discrete programme elements well integrated resulting in a coherent degree programme?	Yes		
2.2 Do the relevant learning outcomes align with the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies	Yes	Although some updates were noted within the documentation for the programmes	
2.3 Where applicable, does the curriculum match the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N/A	the programmes are seeking re-accreditation by the RSB, RSC and IOP in 2024	
2.4 Does the structure of the degree programme enable students to demonstrate progression?	Yes		
2.5 Where appropriate, did the placement make an appropriate contribution to the degree programme?	N/A		
2.6 For collaborative courses only, do you think that the collaboration between the University and it(s) partner institution(s) is working well?	N/A		

Assessment Process

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
3.1 Did you receive all the necessary draft assessments/examination papers for comment in good time?	Yes		
3.2 Were the nature and level of questions and tasks appropriate?	Yes		
3.3 If applicable, were the comments you provided in relation to 3.1 and 3.2 acted upon?	N/A		
3.4 Did you receive an appropriate number of scripts for scrutiny?	Yes	Although some older scripts were unavailable after a transfer from Moodle to SkillsForge. Evidence of completion of assessments were available as Certificates of completion where this happened.	
3.5 Were the marking criteria fit for purpose and appropriate?	Yes		
3.6 Were the standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	No	The assessment of some submissions was inconsistently applied by a handful of first markers (supervisors) and justified the use of moderation by the programme lead. I support the outcomes suggested following moderation.	
3.7 Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Yes	Feedback and explanation of marking was given for submissions on SkillsForge	
3.8 Were moderation processes clear?	Yes		

Academic Standards

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
4.1 Were academic standards appropriate for the award?	Yes		
4.2 Was the overall assessment load for students registered on the degree programme appropriate?	Yes	Although some duplication appears with a minor number of assessments (e.g. in relation to IP and ethics)	
4.3 Was the Board of Examiners conducted fairly?	Yes		
4.4 Were criteria for determining borderline cases appropriately and consistently applied?	Yes		
4.5 Were arrangements for consideration of mitigating circumstances appropriate?	Yes	The non-submission of one assessment was agreed upon due to privacy (GDPR) reasons.	
4.6 In your opinion, are the overall academic standards and achievements at least as good if not better than at other comparable UK institutions?	Yes		
4.7 For the medical degree (MBChB) programme only, were standard setting processes clear?			

If applicable, meetings with Students

Although we do not expect you to meet with students in your role as External Examiner, we are keen to have your observations in case you were able to meet with them when you visited the University of Warwick.

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
5.1 Were you provided with an opportunity to meet groups of students informally to talk to them about their degree programme?	Yes		
5.2 If you met students, please can you comment on any issues raised by them which the School/Department needs to be aware of?		Students were present from a range of backgrounds and feedback was sort on student experience across the cohorts. Overall, the student experience was positive, with the content of the modules commended. However, it was noted that students experienced different challenges/incentives based on their respective departments (later discussed with the teaching team), but all saw value in having example assessments to work from given the portfolio approach to assessment is less familiar to them.	

Enhancement of Provision

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
6.1 Please comment on any areas of good practice, distinctive and innovative features in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that would be worth sharing across the University.		The teaching and administrative team should be commended for their student-centered, enthusiastic and committed delivery of the programmes. There is a clear desire to provide a strong supportive environment for the students to develop their professional development skills. The programmes are designed to support the progression of PGR students and PDRAs in developing research and project management skills, necessary to become an independent researcher. It also encourages students to reflect on their achievements and the operational aspects of their projects throughout their studies. These aspects of the programmes align well with accreditation requirements of professional bodies.	
6.2 Are there any areas where you feel that the School/Department and/or University has not responded to your comments or suggestions raised in previous reports?	No		

Issues requiring actions/response

Question	Response	Examiner Comments	Department Comments
7.1 Are there any essential actions matters, in your opinion which put academic quality and/or standards at risk and require immediate attention from the Head of School/Department?	Yes	Update of scheme documentation (programme specification, module specifications and handbooks) ? this has been discussed with the programme team and an action plan for amendments has been agreed.	
7.2 Are there any advisable actions matters where threshold standards are met but, where in your opinion, significant improvement could be made?	Yes	- Providing some example assessments for students to view ? soft skills assessments are less familiar to students. Hopefully reduce the resubmissions of assessments where information is insufficient. - Providing information on the deadline/estimated timeline for assessments to the students. - Implementing a more frequent review of programme documentation	

Other comments

Question	Response	Examiner Comments
8.1 Do you have any other comments which you have not been able to mention anywhere else?	Yes	Consider some form of external recognition for Engineering and Mathematics students as a tangible external CPD outcome (for greater incentivisation) for these students (e.g. CChem, CBiol etc).

Final comments as External Examiner

Question	Examiner Comments
9.1 If this is your last year as External Examiner, please provide an overview of your experience as an External Examiner:	