



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Sarah Riley		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Aberystwyth University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Psychology within the School of Social Sciences		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-17	Date of Report:	31 st July 2017

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught stage** Examining Board in the case of **postgraduate Master's programmes**).

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

The curriculum offers an excellent programme of psychology modules within a wider social science framework. The modules are designed to elicit deep learning and to develop critical thinking and the ability to link theory with real world application in creative ways. Methods of learning and teaching seem appropriate and linked to the content well.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

The standards of the assignments are comparable with other UK HEIs with which I am familiar, and students demonstrated achievement of the subject QAA benchmarks for Psychology. A good range of marks were given, and the assignments receiving first class marks demonstrated excellence in line with accepted marking at a national level. A high level of intellectual rigour was evidence across the assignments that I reviewed.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

Aims and learning outcomes were clearly articulated and the assignments were designed to test these learning outcomes. Many modules had a wide range of marks given across the student body, demonstrating that the assignment was able to distinguish between students and could stretch stronger students who produced excellent work. There were similar standards between the modules of the same level.

Modules did differ in how much of the course content was tested in assignments. For example, one module asked students to answer only one question from six (the six being the topics covered in the module making the questions relatively predictable) meaning that most students would have only studied a 1/6th of the course. Others had more integrated assignments that required students to draw on a range of the content.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

There has been year on year improvements in the programme provision. Of significant differences has been the take up of online marking and module information provision. All the modules now use grade centre and use both the quick comments and overall comment facilities offered by the Turn it in software, so that feedback was detailed and informative.

5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

The introduction of a memory stick will all relevant information was useful. Supporting information was provided.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

Critical thinking is a key component developed across the modules I reviewed and the staff should be congratulated on the creative ways that they developed assignments within the university's exam/assignment structure. Overall, the module content and assignments developed students' understanding of theory, empirical knowledge and their ability to reflexively apply it to themselves and the wider world, enabling the development of intellectual thinking that was commendable.

During the exam board it was clear that personal tutors knew who their students were and were familiar with these students and any attendant problems that were affecting their studies. Concern for the welfare of these students was obvious.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

A consistent aspect of the programme during my time as external examiner has been the great range of assessments used that were designed to develop in-depth, critical thinking. A hallmark of Psychology in the Social Sciences at Cardiff therefore is the development of critical and reflexive thinking and intellectual rigour.

Equally commendable is the range of marks being used, so that excellent work is being given the highest mark, equally staff are not afraid to give poor work low marks. The assignments clearly distinguish between students, and while weaker students can still attempt the assignment, strong students are being stretched appropriately.

A development in the marking that I've witnessed over the past four years has been the move to digital. This took a few years to embed, but now all the modules I reviewed were using learning central and turnitin in comparable and consistent ways. Where I see future developments is in considering 'feed forward' feedback – the feedback I reviewed was in depth and useful about the current assignment and was thus good feedback. But where staff could develop is by also explaining to the student what they might learn from how they addressed the current assignment to develop their subsequent work.

Another development I have witnessed is in relation to the audit trail for marking and moderating. Over the past four years this has developed, and is now for the most part there and clear. There is still the occasional module where the process of agreeing marks by the marker/moderator is not clear, and not all moderators follow the guidelines of giving ticks or arrows to demonstrate agreement or suggested changes. Instead, they give a mark which makes it unclear as to whether an assignment is moderated or second marked. The dissertation module in particular had minimal audit trail.

I also recommend some discussion by the staff for developing a systematic approach to exam feedback. Some staff are doing this, others not.

Note there was a problem with turnitin giving me (and some other external examiners) access.

8. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-7 above for any answer of 'No'.

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Programme/Course Information				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	X		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	X		
Draft Examination Question Papers				

8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	X		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	X		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	X		
Marking Examination Scripts				
8.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	X		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	X		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	x		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	X		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	X		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	X		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	X		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	X		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	X		
8.19	Cardiff University recognises the productive contribution of External Examiners to the assessment process and, in particular, to the work of the Examining Board. Have you had adequate opportunities to discuss the Programme and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	X		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?		x	
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			x
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			x

Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			X
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			X
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			X
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			X
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			X
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			x
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			
8.30	Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i>			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:

externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE