**EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM**

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|  | For completion by External Examiner: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of External Examiner: | Shelley Tracey | | |
| Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner: | Queen's University Belfast | | |
| Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report: | PGCE (PCET) | | |
| Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report: | 2012/2013 | Date of Report: | 16 June 2013 |

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided.  Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online.**

### Programme Structure

This is a well-structured programme which offers PCGE (PCET) students appropriate opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and competence, both as pre-service and in-service students. The programme addresses the learning and pedagogical needs of students teaching in a wide range of contexts in post compulsory education.

The programme specification and learning outcomes are clearly outlined in the course and module handbooks. The programme addresses the professional development needs of practitioners in a range of contexts.

Students are well-prepared for teaching practice, which takes place after the first semester, and are well-supported on this practice by a comprehensive mentoring programme.

The PTP assignment requires students to collate and present evidence of their learning journeys across the academic year, and to reflect on their experiences.

The programme commences appropriately with a sociology module, which frames the learning experience and developing students' awareness of the wider contexts social, political and policy contexts which impact on their practice.

**Recommendations**

Level 6/7 assessments:
While most part-time students had opted to be assessed at Level 6 rather than Level 7, they expressed a desire for more clarity about the differences between the two levels. It is recommended that more information be provided in the first weeks of the course about the choice between Level 6 and Level 7 assessments. Examples of level 6 and Level 7 assignments and criteria for assessing them might be shared.

Key skills:
The planning assignments would benefit from more detail about key skills; these are referred to by some students in a fairly superficial manner.
The programme would benefit from more focused input on embedding literacy and numeracy.
Students teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL should be encouraged to avoid the outdated use of decontextualized worksheets and base their planning on social practice models of learning.

## 2. Academic Standards
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The course contents and materials are designed to address the LLUK criteria for professional practice in the post-16 sector; there is ample support and infrastructure for students to demonstrate that they have achieved the appropriate benchmark standards.

The teaching practice feedback proforma makes direct reference to LLUK standards, and assessors identify clearly the extent to which students are addressing these standards. In addition, students are required to complete detailed rationales for eight of the lessons which they deliver, and to link these rationales to the relevant LLUK standards.

There is a variation in standards of attainment, as is to be expected.

Feedback on failed coursework submissions is constructive, with clear directions for improvement. The students made good use of the feedback, and all resubmissions passed.

The writing frames for the self-assessment are well-designed to facilitate reflection. As is normal, there was a variation in the depth of reflection and the quality of the writing. The work of the student who achieved the highest mark was most impressive.

Students generally plan for their teaching practice effectively, despite their relative lack of experience. They all display good subject knowledge. It was pleasing to see the development in their capacity for reflection. There is room for improvement in a few cases in terms of ensuring opportunities for learners to participate in the learning process.

There was good evidence that feedback from mentors and tutors had contributed towards progression in learning. College mentors generally give clear feedback and identify clearly how students have progressed.

## 3. The Assessment Process

This is exemplary, with one or two minor exceptions.

The assignments are well-designed, although the change to the regulations about word length for assignments means that students have less space in which to address the requirements. Assignment topics should therefore be revisited, and redesigned where appropriate.

Feedback is detailed and constructive, with full use of the criteria to indicate areas for improvement.

All work was moderated, with useful comments by moderators.

It was noted that the forms for documenting and commenting on teaching practice have changed, with a requirement to allocate marks to each aspect of the lesson. Two members of the team expressed reservations about grading the teaching practice sessions and the amount of writing involved, but the descriptors for these grades are clear, and it is likely the issues will resolve over time and growing familiarity with the processes.

A minority of students did not appear to have received their assessed teaching practice feedback, so may have been unable to build on this in subsequent sessions.

## 4. Year-on-Year Comments

In the past academic year, I observed four sessions of teaching practice, accompanied on each occasion by the course tutor, who delivered oral and written feedback.   It was useful to be able to witness four members of the team in this role, as well as to experience four classes in different subject areas.

I also saw the summative assessments for the teaching practice observations. This documentation included students' self-assessments of the lessons. The writing frames for the self-assessment are well-designed to facilitate reflection.

Although the standard of teaching varied, all of the paperwork had been completed effectively and students had prepared well. Feedback from tutors was generally comprehensive and constructive.

Students should ensure that they provide a clear introduction at the start of their PTP, setting their work in context.

It was noted that the forms for documenting and commenting on teaching practice have changed, with a requirement to allocate marks to each aspect of the lesson. Meeting with part-time students students identified areas of satisfaction and those which require improvement:

Students were enjoying and benefiting from the courses. They commented on the amount of learning possible from interacting with a group of colleagues from diverse backgrounds and educational contexts. They were enjoying the content of the lectures and their relevance to their practice.

It appears that the full time-allocation is not always used for the evening class. Students expressed concern that they were sometimes sent home early or sent to the library, when they would prefer a full session in which the themes of the lectures could be discussed and debated. More seminar work was suggested, with less emphasis on lectures in some classes.

Students also expressed a desire for more tutorial time for support about matters such as lack of confidence about completing assignments.

## 5. Preparation / Induction Activity (for new External Examiners only)

N/A

## 6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

### Noteworthy Practice

The assessments are well-designed, and appropriate for a teacher education programme, addressing both the academic and professional aspects effectively.

The criteria for the assignments are explained very clearly and effectively in the module handbooks. In addition, students said that the module tutors took care to address any uncertainties about addressing the requirements for the assignments.

The overviews of assignments provided by the module coordinators of Sociology SIT 114 Values SIT 117 and Planning SIT 124 are exemplary. These overviews point out effectively the strengths and weaknesses of the assignments, identifying clearly areas for improvement.

Effective use of the proforma to give feedback on teaching practice observations. This feedback enhances reflection. Verbal feedback on teaching practice is constructive and supportive.

The eLearning module is well-designed and positioned at the end of the programme, allowing students to integrate their learning effectively.

The student conference at the end of the academic year is innovative and effective. It allows students to share examples of good parctioce in theoretical and practical aspects of eLearning.

The conference also incorporates panel discussions on issues of inclusion. The inclusion case study enhances awareness about additional learning needs, and the panel discussions allow for effective dissemination of individual students' learning.

The programme is to be commended for its recognition of the importance of technology in teaching and learning, and addresses this area to a greater extent than do other similar teacher education programmes. The module on e-learning (SIT 119) supports students to explore the use of technology in their practice, allowing for a range of responses, both sophisticated engagement with technology and a more limited, although effective, application of its possibilities to their practice.

**Enhancement**

The Psychology module SIO 222 lacks the theoretical depth and cohesion of other modules on the programme. It appears from some of the assignments that Transactional Analysis is presented as a psychological foundation for learning. This misconception should be addressed in the feedback, with more focus in the module on contemporary and robust psychological foundations of learning.

In the e-learning project, students should pay more attention to the correct use of language in the programmes and learning materials which they have developed. : Lack of proofreading or awkward expression can detract from the overall impact of what is in many cases exceptional work.

**7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

It has been a privilege to work alongside the course team, most ably led by the Course Director. Her commitment and expertise are exemplary.

The programme provides students teaching in a range of post-16 provision with a sound and holistic learning experience and prepares them effectively for professional practice.

My visits were organised efficiently, with a good range of teaching practice observations. It has been helpful to be able to speak to students pre-service, (part-time, first and second year) to find out about their experiences of the course. Coursework sent beforehand for scrutiny was well-presented, with useful covering comments and mark sheets.

In the first year of my post, I made substantial recommendations for improvement of assessment processes, and it has been satisfying to see that these have been addressed.

It is pleasing to see that students are now paying closer attention to referencing and the correct use of language in their assignments.

I wish the Director, her team and their students every success.

## 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** | | | | |

| | | Yes (Y) | No (N) | N/A (N/A) |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 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 |

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

ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk

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Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE