



## 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](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof. Paola Pedarzani		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	UCL		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience, Physiology) <i>BSc in Biomedical Sciences and the BSc in Biomedical Sciences (Intercalated) (Neuroscience, Physiology)</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-17	Date of Report:	16/06/2017

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)

I have looked specifically into the Biomedical Sciences (Physiology) and Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience) programme structure. Curriculum design, including the availability of several subject-specific modules in the final year, level setting and application of a variety of teaching and learning methods are overall sound. One notable structural weakness concerns the topic of Developmental Neurobiology. Although a high standard, advanced course is available in the final year, "precursor modules" or equivalent taught elements need to be developed as part of year 2, to provide the students with the necessary background knowledge that will enable them to cope with the complex and detailed content of the final year module. This aspect in the curriculum design of the Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience) programme needs to be carefully revised, as discussed with members of the School.

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

I found both the academic standards, the expectations and achievements of students definitely high, comparable to those of other top UK Universities.

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

All modules that I have scrutinised were properly designed and structured to ensure that the students could achieve the desired learning outcomes, as reflected by very good or excellent performance of the students in their coursework and, overall, the solid outcome in the final exams.

Structure and stretch of the assessment was reasonably comparable across most modules I have checked. In the case of one module that had a lower average mark, we had a constructive discussion with the organiser, members of the School and Exam Board on how to revise the curriculum to improve students' performance in the long term.

In terms of assessment of the exam papers, I found standards very comparable and coherent across modules. While most modules provided exam scripts with very good and clear annotations, this was unfortunately less the case for some of the questions in one of them, that was flagged up to the School: hopefully this will be improved for next year.

Overall, I found that markers made a good use of the full range of marks, with examples of outstanding exam papers marked in the 80-90% range.

Final year projects were of high standard, both in terms of the breadth and depth of topics covered, quality of the write-ups and robustness of the assessment process.

**4. Year-on-Year Comments**

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

This year we were given a 96 pages-long spreadsheet with all of the marks that contribute to the final degree class of every student, plotted as individual profiles. It would be useful to have, in addition or instead, a summary spreadsheet collating all of the marks that contribute to the final degree class of every student for a single degree course (i.e. Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience), Biomedical Sciences (Physiology), etc). This would be helpful to determine how a module that received particularly low marks would influence a degree outcome if the marks were higher.

The application of marking criteria, making use of the full range of marks, has clearly improved.

**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)

Excellent advance planning of dates, comprehensive briefing and provision of programme handbooks and relevant supporting information. I particularly enjoyed meeting with the student representatives in March and receiving their feedback on various degree courses. Outstanding support by [REDACTED] throughout the process.

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

In most modules, I found annotations on the exam scripts very useful to understand how marks were allocated and justified, resulting in a fair and robust marking process.

Very good practice in marking final year projects, with a well balanced set of components and thorough comments and reports by supervisors and second markers.

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

N/A

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			N/A
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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?	Y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y <sub>(part)</sub>		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				<b>N/A</b>
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			
<b>Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)</b>				<b>N/A</b>
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?			
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			
8.30	<b>Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations.</b> <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](mailto: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