

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Alistair Warren		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Sheffield		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	Bioscience (Biomedical)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-17	Date of Report:	June 2017

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

### 1. Programme Structure

The changes we heard about last year, reducing to four degree routes at entry and fewer, larger modules (each module worth 40 credits) at Level 2 appear to be working as planned. The advantages noted last year, such as students having more opportunity for synoptic learning with a reduced overall workload for staff remain sensible drivers for these changes. On-going evaluation through student questionnaires would be interesting to ensure the student experience is as expected.

The introduction of integrated Masters routes also seem to be working well with a little under 10% of students due to start this option from the 2017/18 session. The Professional Training Year remains a positive response to the needs of both employers and students and is likely to strongly enhance graduate employability.

### 2. Academic Standards

Student attainment is good and standards are in-line with equivalent institutions. Benchmark standards are met. Student expectations and workload are appropriate.

### 3. The Assessment Process

There is a good range of assessment methods, which are applied rigorously and fairly. The markers used the range of marks available well and feedback was, usually, a good match to the score provided. Indeed feedback was often quite extensive. This certainly helped me as an External and there might be a way for this feedback to also help students, at least for those continuing their studies? Scrutiny (production of papers, marking, moderating and provision of feedback on scripts) is reliable and helpful to Externals. Moderation/ scrutiny was generally clear.

The minor glitches with Learning Central were quickly and satisfactorily resolved by professional support staff. While project reports can easily be put into alphabetical order by users of the system, one suggestion is to group reports into degree programme blocks to aid searching.

Support from academic and administrative staff was excellent and the briefing early in my visit was very useful. As noted last year, early access to a comprehensive spread sheet of marks from all components of the assessment to include each student would be very helpful. Large sheets of data were provided but these were not generally very 'user-friendly'. Ideally a simple spreadsheet format, as discussed last year, would be preferred. I understand there are limitations in the centralised software that make this difficult to obtain. This point was also made last year and, the response from the Academic Registrar (27<sup>th</sup> February 2017) indicated departments have access to a 'suite of reports.....to meet the requirements of their Examining Boards." However this does not seem to be the case as departmental staff spent a considerable amount of time in an effort to provide the information that the Externals felt was helpful because it does not appear to be available centrally.

Departmental staff had clearly spent a good deal of time out of hours working to meet our requests. When a change to a mark set was recommended the department was not able to put this into effect directly but need to converse with Registry. I recognise, and endorse, the need for robust quality assurance processes that are monitored and are equivalent between areas of the institution. However there seems to be a need for some of these issues to be clarified, perhaps through discussion between the relevant areas (Registry and Departmental staff?) to clarify exactly what is possible through the 'Student information Lifecycle project' and how the information requested by Externals might best be provided within the very tight timescale at this time of year. I note a letter from the Examination Board Chair last year that raised similar issues does not appear to have been addressed formally, although I also recognise the point made at the Examination Board that Registry staffing has been under some pressure.

The Examination Board was conducted fairly, diligently and with obvious care by all staff involved. I welcome the change in procedure this year that meant detailed work was completed by the relevant internal staff who could then make recommendations to the Board, with Externals having the oversight.

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

2<sup>nd</sup> year – comments covered above

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

N/A (2<sup>nd</sup> year)

#### **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

As mentioned earlier, the Professional Training Year is interesting and appears to be implemented well at Cardiff.

I understand [REDACTED] is stepping down from his role as Director of Undergraduate Education and I thank him, and the department, for their support

and look forward to [REDACTED] tenure in this role. Departmental staff provided excellent support throughout the examining period.

**7. Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations (External Examiners for postgraduate Master's Programmes only, see also 9.23-9.29 below)**

N/A

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

N/A

**9. Annual Report Checklist**

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 above for any answer of 'No'.

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	Y		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
9.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	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>				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			NA

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
9.19	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>				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		
<b>Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)</b>				
9.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A

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

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cf.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

#### **SAMPLING OF TAUGHT MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

External Examiners shall be expected to see prescribed numbers and ranges of Dissertations, but not to mark them, on the following basis:

At least 10% of Dissertations for a postgraduate taught Master's Programme, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure) must be seen by the External Examiner(s). Where the total number is less than 10, all Dissertations must be seen by the External Examiner(s) #.

Dissertations seen by External Examiners should include examples from across the whole range of achievement (i.e. Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail).

External Examiners will retain the right to see other Dissertations at random.

# Where more than one External Examiner is appointed on a Programme, at least 10% of Dissertations, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure), should be seen collectively by the External Examiners.