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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Helen James		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of East Anglia		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Primary BDS, Part 1		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017-18	Date of Report:	2 July 2018

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board.

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 General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

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

There is a good combination of biochemistry, physiology and anatomy (with assessments contributing to the final % mark), with some clinical aspects/experience (on a P/F basis). When I scrutinised the examination papers I was struck by the amount of anatomy that the students are expected to remember and understand (in comparison to the biochemistry and physiology). This probably reflects my lack of expertise in this area (anatomy) rather than an imbalance in the programme. I was reassured by the teaching and course team during my visit, that the amount and level of anatomy was appropriate for the Part 1 of the programme.

The programme is coherent and has a strong practical element (which I applaud); there is a good mix of teaching approaches and assessment styles. There was a change in the examination papers' formats this year with the removal of the essay questions (replaced with additional short answer questions). Whilst I think it a shame the essay questions were removed (as I believe this style of question allows students to demonstrate their ability to synthesise information as well as show their knowledge of facts), I understand the rationale for changing the format.

The year 1 curriculum fits well with the QAA benchmark statements for dentistry.

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

As stated above the year 1 programme fits well with the QAA benchmark statements for dentistry. During my visit I had the opportunity to look at a number of pieces of student work (both coursework and examinations). The academic standards and achievements, across a range of ability students, were comparable to similar stage students I'm more familiar with.

The Pass/Fail nature of the Reflective Portfolio and Viva allows an assessment of professional competencies and it is appropriate that these are considered alongside the assessment of the academic knowledge and understanding of the students. I was pleased to note that this year there were very few students who had failed either of these components in contrast to the previous two years (for which I have been external examiner). As in previous years, a lot of guidance had been given to the students about both of these assessments, however what has probably resulted in this improvement was that the portfolio assessment had undergone some changes, as had the timing of the submission in relation to the viva (if I remember correctly). The students have clearly benefited from these changes.

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

The assessments are split into three sections (coursework (including practical assessments and the 'spotter'), projects (including group work), and examinations (including ICAs)), in addition to the clinical competencies. Broadly this is unchanged since last year, although there has been a slight reduction in the number of in course assessments (ICAs) with the removal of a formative test, and the aforementioned changes to exam paper format and portfolio. The removal of an ICA is a good move I feel; as noted in my previous reports I did query whether the students were being over-assessed. I do wonder if there is still some 'assessment fatigue' as there were substantially more students failing ICA3 in comparison to both ICA1 and 2. This is similar to that noted last year for ICA4 in comparison to ICA2 and 3. Alternatively there may be a subject area, or some aspect of ICA3 which the students find more challenging. The question by question spreadsheets for each assessment, provided to us during our visit, were really useful and help to identify the questions and subject areas the students are struggling with (or are finding easy). One request – please could you add both the mean and mode mark for each question for future spreadsheets? I would also encourage you to continue to evaluate the amount of assessment requested of the students.

The variety of assessments provides the students with different opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. As mentioned earlier in my report, the essay question has been removed from each of the exam papers. This removes some of the subjectivity involved in the marking of such answers, and also eases the workload associated with marking (with the assumption that short answer questions are 'easier' to mark than essay answers). The variety of types of short answer questions, with some expecting detailed paragraph answers, still allows the students to demonstrate synthesis of information. I think it is important to maintain this. I was sent the examination papers (main and resit) with model answers for comment. There were a good mixture of style over a variety of short answer questions. The model answers were very informative and give a clear indication of expectations.

The Assessment Criteria and marking schemes appeared entirely appropriate. During my visit I looked at ~10% of student work (those that had failed, some that were close to the pass mark, and some from the top of the rank order list). It was clear that the marking of the examinations and ICAs had been undertaken appropriately and consistently. I would like to see some examples of marked practical reports which contribute to the coursework mark. If these are available online I have not been able to find them.

The Exam Board itself was run efficiently and the summary paperwork provided was very informative and helpful. All the exam papers and project work was available to look at. Any queries I had were quickly dealt with and answered in a satisfactory manner.

This was the 2nd year that the pass mark was 50%, and the 2nd year that standard setting was employed. As noted last year, thank you again for the detailed report on how the standard setting was achieved (for the three exam papers). I very much appreciate the time and effort put in to producing this analysis and report in a limited timeframe; I would encourage you to continue as it does provide evidence for both the robustness and fairness of the assessments.

Extenuating circumstances are dealt with suitably. This year the impact of the UCU strike had to be taken into consideration. Although reasonably complex (D codes for assessments affected), the measures taken were appropriate.

Overall I am happy that the assessment process is rigorous but fair and that marking is appropriate and consistent.

4. **Examination of Master's Dissertations** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

n/a

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

My report last year did not raise any specific issues that required a detailed response from the School. I am however encouraged that they have continued with the wide variety of assessments, and that these along with the assessment load, are under constant review. Over the now three years I have been External Examiner for this programme I have seen a number of changes (change in pass mark from 40 to 50%, the introduction of question setting, changes to the clinical assessment, the (slight) reduction in assessment load, and the replacement of the essay questions with addition short answer questions in the examination papers). These changes have all been introduced for good reasons, and have been successfully accomplished with the benefit of the students at their forefront.

6. **Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

n/a

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

The variety of assessments, including a number of practicals, group work and the reflective commentary.

The importance placed on clinical experience (assessed on P/F basis).

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

n/a

9. 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				
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?		N	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
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		
Examination scripts				
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		
Coursework and practical assessments				
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		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining board meeting				
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		
Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

Please return this Report, in a **Microsoft Word format**, by email to:
externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

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