



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Fiona Timmins		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Trinity College Dublin		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MSc Critical Care		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/2015	Date of Report:	24 th May 2015

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

1. Programme Structure

The programme is well structured.

2. Academic Standards

Students performed satisfactorily across modules, and comparable with students at other third level institutes.

However Examination Board conduct is quite out of keeping with that which I have experienced in the UK previously insofar as it is very unusual that External Examiners are not invited to the Examination Board in person.

Although I was initially invited to attend the Examination Board upon commencing the post (by the then Administrator) I was later explained that:

"We usually do this by telephone or video conference as our exam boards do not usually last much more than 30 minutes"

While not wishing to down play the important role of technology, and the potential for cost and time saving, it is difficult to see how an External Examiner can verify processes that he/she cannot personally witness (nothing can be seen except faces, marks were received by email). Additionally while there was to be an independent observer [Simon Wilkins Independent Observer (PGT MEDIC Academic)] from the

College at the meeting, this person did not turn up. In my view this is not procedurally correct.

This is something that I have raised with the team and they have responded to the comments and invited Examiners to the next Exam Board meeting in July.

While it may be possible for the Exam Board [in accordance with University Regulations] to

“monitor and confirm student performance in both individual Modules (or Units of Study) and across Programmes”

It is more difficult to in a short telephone/Skype meeting to.:

“consider the quality of provision and the standards of awards across modules, years and programmes”

The University Regulations clearly indicate *attendance*. The membership of Examining Boards should include the External Examiner(s) where a Module or Unit of Study contributing to the final assessment is considered:

“External Examiners are required to attend meetings of Examining Boards at which award classifications are determined, they have an involvement in monitoring the standards of Programmes on a regular basis. Schools may invite External Examiners to attend non final meetings of the Examining Board but there is no requirement for them to attend.

In taught Master’s Programmes, the Chair of an Examining Board should discuss with External Examiners whether it will be preferable for them to attend at the end of the taught stage, after dissertations have been submitted, or at both points”

It is also good practice, from a quality perspective, for External Examiners to meet with staff and students. While it has been raised that, as the course comprises distance learning this may be difficult, and ways for External Examiner to meet with students is being explored. However this needs to fit within University Regulations (the Examiner ought not to be contacting students directly on line for example, but rather this needs to be facilitated by Cardiff staff, perhaps after the Examination Board).

3. The Assessment Process

The assessments are fair and provide students with opportunity to succeed.

Marking is consistently fair. There is evidence of robust internal moderation..

Overall the assessments are appropriate and comprehensive assessments of the learning outcomes and are consistent with the module aims and requirements at this level. The assessments are at a comparable level with those provided at other third level institutions.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my first year at Cardiff.

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

Overall the preparation as a new External Examiner has only been reasonable in comparison with other UK universities.

It is noted that administrative support has been withdrawn from the programme, and while initially all preparatory documentation was received efficiently from administrators, this burden has now fallen onto academic staff. This is not an academic role per se, and one would not expect an academic to be as familiar with or as efficient with procedures. I raised this point with the team and they have responded remarkably to this.

There was no training or guidance provided for the GCU online marking system, and no details of EE training event was received until April 2015 [at very short notice to attend]. There have also been some issues with Blackboard access, possibly as a result of the withdrawal of administrative support (i.e I wasn't enrolled or I didn't have direct access to work that required examination). The instructions provided for Blackboard initially were not consistent with and did not correspond with the onscreen view that the External Examiner received. Again this was raised with the academic staff and they have made Trojan efforts to providing advice and training and have been incredibly responsive.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Staff appear highly motivated towards programme management and development, and were very responsive to comments.

Detailed feedback is provided to students and is done so in a very encouraging way leaving students very clear as to the deficits (if any) in their responses.

MSc Dissertations were of a very good standard. There was also a lot of attention to detail by the students such as good presentation and references - they are obviously receiving very good supervision and teaching.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?			
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?			

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

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:

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