



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Emma Uprichard		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Warwick		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc Sociology		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	20-12-13	Date of Report:	27 June 2013

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

- This is an excellent sociology programme in line with other Russell Group, maintaining high quality academic standards set for its award in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable benchmark statements.
- I thought that both for the form and content of the modules as a collective programme was first class and warrants much greater national and international attention and limelight. It can afford to be sell itself externally a bit more, I think; it is an excellent programme.

2. Academic Standards

This section should provide informative comment and recommendations on whether or not:

- The academic standards across all modules I saw was excellent.
- I thought the examinations process and procedures was excellent. I liked the consistency of rules and the sense of student equity. It might have been useful to have had a bit more of a sense of how special cases and mitigation were applied case by case, for it is often there that difficult decisions need to be made. That said, the process of how these were dealt with seemed sensible overall.
- The QM methods programme will soon bring changes to UG methods programmes, however, and it is likely that further changes may be required across the programme, with further embedding across modules. But this is certainly in line with other academic institutions with similar standards. The achievements of students are also

comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which I have had previous experience.

- I thought the 'first class' work was especially strong across all modules, with some exciting work across the programme.
- Likewise, I thought the dissertations were especially impressive, with the quantitative secondary analysis of the dissertations I saw especially strong. With the move to increase quantitative methods

3. The Assessment Process

This section should provide informative comment and recommendations on whether or not assessment:

- Assessment process and procedures are appropriately designed and applied; excellent variety of assessment.
- Measures of student achievement are rigorous and fairly gauged against the intended learning outcomes of the programme across all the modules I saw;
- All procedures to my knowledge were conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations.
- On the whole, at least with regards to the modules I was looking at, there was an excellent range of assessment methods and there was a good balance between them, and volume of assessment within and across the modules remain appropriate;
- I thought the assessment criteria, marking schemes and award classifications are set at the appropriate level;
- Assessments in modules of the same level are of a comparable standard.
- I was especially impressed with the range of quantitative and transferrable skills that were incorporated and assessed in the Social Research Methods module. The way it was marked was in line with some of the best UK and international programmes I am familiar with, and still identifies the weak students from the strong ones. However, the range of skills was arguably greater, and therefore is arguably of higher academic standing, than in many places.
- I thought the level of secondary analysis in the quantitative dissertations I marked was excellent. For example one of them had even linked 2 years and conducted a small longitudinal analysis which excellent. More importantly, the depth of understanding of the variables they were working with was spot on across all the quantitative dissertations.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

- N/A

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

- I was given excellent support and guidance and all my questions were answered quickly and helpfully. The External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided as preparation for the fulfilment of the role of an External Examiner was excellent also and very helpful..

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

- I would have preferred to have had access to more data about ALL the modules, e.g. number of students, range of scores, how many students get 0-9%, 10-20% across each 10% band, number of students per degree classification, etc. This would allow a much better sense of how the programme is working across all the modules.
- Because of the importance of the ' mark plays in deciding degree classifications, and also because employability metrics are increasingly used to assess institutional success, and many other institutions are 'rigging the system', I did think that it was in the School's advantage to increase their first class marks. If there was a consistent mechanism to 'transform' the scores consistently across this 0-30 score point system (unlike the 2:1 and 2:2 bands, which only have 10, e.g. 5-59 60-69), this would not necessarily devalue the degrees the way that some colleagues may feel. For example, instead of 70 or 72, the lowest available first score mark might be 75, followed by 80, 85, 90 for a good, very good, excellent/near to publishable. This is just a suggestion, of course, but is a policy that other 5* Sociology departments are already doing elsewhere in the UK, so would not be out of line with other places.
- Having access to the marks for all the students would be beneficial also. It would, for example, be useful to see if there were common routes through the degree for particular kinds of students across the degree. This would allow a better sense of the 'progression' and 'pathways' for particular kinds of groups of students and would possibly signal ways in which some students may be better or worse off taking particular routes through the degree.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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)
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

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