



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.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Mark Woolford		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	King's College London		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BDS programme, Dental School		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017/18	Date of Report:	06/2018

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)

The curriculum for this programme follows conventional lines and is accredited with the GDC UK for award of BDS. The programme is taught to the appropriate level with Final Year teaching probably at level 7. A range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies are used throughout the programme. I have examined this programme for 4 years now and am impressed with all aspects of the teaching and learning of the students.

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

The programme meets all expectations with regard to PSRB requirements and all students graduate BDS and are registrable with the GDC UK. The achievement of the students is very good. The majority of the cohort invariably get a 1st or 2.1, as would be expected for the quality of student at intake. The students are at least comparable with other graduates from UK HEIs. I have no concerns on this front.

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

A number of components make up the Final examination carried out over almost one academic Year. The programme is intensely assessed, consideration could be given to a review of the extent of the assessment in Final Year of the programme. The aims of the programme are easily met and learning outcomes addressed. The programme is not mapped, as I have seen, to the learning outcomes of the GDC. Standards are high and have been maintained over the period I have examined. There is much emphasis in each part of the clinical examination on medical history. At least one third of the time is taken up by this topic. This seems excessive. Candidates can be asked the same questions in each examination and so the process of assessment can be incomplete.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

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

Comment has been made on previous occasions to the need for three written papers of similar content and style. The papers do not seem to discriminate between candidates and it is a lot of work for no great outcome of assessment. One paper would suffice? This should be considered once more by the teaching team. It is the examiners understanding that the style of the exam will change with the provision of at least one SBA MCQ examination.

Examiner training is paramount, although the difficulties are recognised by all the visiting team.

The papers are seen prior to sitting each year. There is still challenge in understanding the allocation of marks to part questions. The question bank is not yet large enough to mitigate new questions each year, but more quality control is needed to ensure fair and valid allocation of marks across and between questions. The layout of the papers still allows the student to write too much, when it is not required.

Students with learning challenges are compromised by some questions that still require far too much reading in preparation and then these questions are awarded marks as for much shorter and easier to assimilate questions.

The visiting examiner team appreciate that papers are blind marked, but without marking on the script it is impossible to see how marks are allocated and also to give accurate feedback to students.

Simple things have not changed such as large radiographs (pans) being too small and small radiographs being excessively enlarged. Standardisation is important across all formats of this examination.

If this number of papers is to be continued consideration should be given to thematic papers. At the present time it is possible for a student to 'game' and miss out critical topics and still comfortably pass the paper. It is still seen as very difficult to fail this style of paper, and then with three similar papers equally difficult to fail the written component of the assessment at all. Discrimination between candidates seems low using the three-paper concept.

Although set questions are given in the oral element of the clinical examination, they are not heavily used and so each student can have a different assessment. This is not ideal practice. It is recommended that more use is made of the set questions.

More time is needed for examiners to discuss candidate performance between each candidate.

It is to be seriously questioned as to the value of candidate summarizing a case which involves reading out the first page of the patient information pack. This wastes time and is valueless in the assessment.

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)

The preparation for the examination was complicated by the illness of the main professional services staff member. The information was provided in a timely way and to the usual high standard. The team is to be congratulated in stepping up to the mark to deliver this complex series of assessments under challenging circumstances. The team delivers supporting information to a very high standard, both for examiners and the students. A programme handbook is available and online resources of information are impressive.

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

The extensive psychometric analysis of the results is to be commended. This is fairly new and an understanding of the data and how it is best used is still being determined. The direction of travel is good. Care must be taken to ensure statistics are not created that have no meaning or value in supporting the outcome of the examination.

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

The use of the veto fail option must be defined. This varies across examining teams and is not reliably used year on year. Standardisation definition and training is required if this option is to remain. Or remove it?

The marking scheme for the oral examinations skews up marks, making it very difficult to fail.

Examiners need to agree on the level being assessed. Some seem to assess almost to specialist level, laudable, but the level has to be that of a safe beginner, as defined by the GDC.

Unconscious bias training is recommended for all examiners.

Do not use long words in explanatory details, one student did not know what 'acrimonious' meant.

Generally, examiners are excellent but there is significant variation. Some appear quite aggressive in their questioning, others speak together as a pair confusing the candidate as to who to listen to. Some leave candidate to go on and on, others interject frequently.

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				
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
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
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?			x
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			x
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			x
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			x
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			x
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			x
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			x
8.30	Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i> N/A			

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