



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

The completion of this Report is supported by *Annual Report Form – Guidance to External Examiners*. The Guidance and this Form are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>. Fee information and claim forms are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/fees/index.html>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Declan McKeefry		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Bradford		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Optometry BSc		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/15	Date of Report:	12/06/2015

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 BSc Optometry degree at Cardiff University is a three year programme that provides the basic scientific and clinical training enabling graduates to follow a training path that will ultimately see them become qualified optometrists. Successful completion of the BSc degree is typically followed by a 1-year Pre-registration period following which they will be eligible to be registered with the General Optical Council (GOC) allowing them to practise as Optometrists.

The course is accredited by the GOC which stipulates that certain core competencies have to be attained by the students and the clinical teaching is geared towards enabling students to reach these required competency levels. As a result, the structure and content of the Optometry degree programme is entirely appropriate and provides a solid foundation in the basic scientific, clinical and legal knowledge that will ultimately be utilised by the students throughout their professional careers.

The programme is delivered within a department that has excellent basic science and clinical teaching facilities by a well-motivated team of staff.

2. Academic Standards

The Optometry course continues to maintain the highest academic standards. The course at Cardiff attracts students with high tariffs and this is reflected in the quality

of marks obtained by this year's 3rd Year cohort. Having read through a number of exam scripts, projects and other elements of coursework the quality and depth of the students' output is highly impressive and is a testament to the excellent teaching and training they receive.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process appears to be thorough and rigorous throughout all stages. Most modules have exam, coursework/practical components that contribute towards a final mark. This range of assessment modes is entirely appropriate and essential for an Optometry degree programme.

As an external examiner I received all 3rd and 2nd Year exam papers and associated marking schemes well in advance and, apart for a few minor points, I found the quality of questions and the subject matter entirely appropriate. During our visit to Cardiff I reviewed a number of exam manuscripts from a range of 2nd and 3rd year modules and in all cases found the marking to be fair and carefully carried out in all instances. There was clear evidence of second marking/moderation in all modules, something that is to be commended. I also inspected a number of projects, course work elements and log books all of which were fairly considered.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

1) This is my third year as external at Cardiff – arrangements did not seem to run quite as smoothly this year as they have in previous years. For example, there was a delay in us receiving key information relating to the projects (Module OP3107). I would request that necessary steps are taken to ensure that all module marks are collated in sufficient time for external examiner scrutiny and that the staff are given sufficient time to facilitate this process. Leaving things so 'close to the wire' as it were increases the likelihood of errors.

The Optometry Course also appears to have experienced a number of changes to its exam regulations as a consequence of the new 'Collegiate' structure within the university. These modifications may also have contributed to this years' disruption to the previously smooth running procedures. The requirement to release assessment marks within a 3 week period seems to have generated difficulties for Optometry students (and staff) as the release of end of year practical assessments coincided with the written examination period. I would suggest that the prospect of students being informed that they have performed poorly in practical exams would be likely to have a negative effect on performance in their written exams. I would strongly recommend that this issue be addressed.

2) There were a number of 3rd year modules that had high module mean marks; BV & Special Needs (OP3103), Low Vision & Contact Lenses (OP3202) and AOC (OP3104). We looked at the exam papers closely for these modules but did not feel that the papers were in any way 'easy' or had been less stringently marked.

3) Student meetings – this continues to be an issue. As an external examiner I feel that it is important to be able to meet with the students, not in any sense to viva them, but instead rather to sample the quality of the students and also obtain some useful feedback as to what aspects of the teaching they considered good and what they may have had issues with. Unfortunately, we were only able to meet with 2 of the cohort – not a useful sample size. Could I please request that some alternative system is put in place where we can be guaranteed to meet with a sample of students (~ 6-10). In my own university we put out a request for students to meet informally with the examiners in advance and cover any reasonable travelling expenses. I think that such a system would be preferable to the somewhat ad hoc nature of current arrangements where we simply do not know if any of the students asked to attend will actually turn up.

4) Projects

The work now presented by the students as part of the project module (OP3107) I think now is more in line with what is expected at other universities for 20 credit modules. Therefore I am glad to see the reduction from the previous 15000 word limit that applied in previous years and I think that this has delivered similar quality, more focussed outputs that have been (I hope) easier in terms of staff time required for marking.

However, I am not sure whether I agree with the different word limits that have been set for projects (4000 words) and dissertations (8000 words). I think that the same limits (with perhaps +/- 10% leeway either way) should be set for both projects and dissertations and furthermore that these limits should be consistently applied by all supervisors.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

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?	Y		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		N	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?	Y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
8.10	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				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?	Y		
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
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?		N	
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			n/a
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			n/a

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