

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

Cardiff University

McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff. CF24 0DE
Wales UK

Tel please see below
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd

Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE
Cymru Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn gweler isod
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.caerdydd.ac.uk

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Jean van den Elsen		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Bath		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Biosciences (Biomolecular Sciences)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-2019	Date of Report:	08/07/19

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation 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 General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

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

The curriculum design, especially after the recent curriculum transformation and the resulting programme structure are of the high standard to be expected of a university of this calibre. The new curriculum structure presents a variety of teaching methods with ample opportunities for students to learn a wide range of skills.

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

The academic standard of the Biosciences degree at the School of Biosciences is of a high standard, comparable to the high-end universities in the South-West (Bristol Exeter and Bath) and the rest of the UK. The student performance is good as evidenced by a high number of awarded Upper-Second and First Class degrees. With respect to PSRB requirements, the School may consider accreditation. We recently started this process for the Biology and Biochemistry degrees at the University of Bath.

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

The assessment process is of a high standard, utilising a varied range of assessment methods that challenges the students on a range of skills sets. Overall the marking range is broad and the grade boundaries (degree classifications) are spot on. Annotation of the exam scripts and course work material is excellent, with clear abbreviations throughout, accompanied by detailed comments. There is clear evidence of second marking. The marking standard is highly comparable between the modules that I looked at (BI3251 Animal Development and Stem Cell Biology; BI3255 Synthetic Biology and Protein Engineering; BI3218 Protein Structure (remnant from before curriculum transformation); BI3001 Final Year Project dissertations; BI4001 MBiochem Final Year Project dissertations).

In order to better assess the spread of the marks as well as the students performance in other modules, it would ideal to have access to these statistics at the next visit.

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

[Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.]

A large sample of dissertations of the BI4001 module of the integrated Master's degree were provided and I was impressed by the wide range of research topics, the quality of the work and the marking standard. Again the degree classifications were spot on in my opinion.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

N/A, as this was my first year as examiner.

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)

Briefing for the role as examiner was very good. Arrangements for assessing the work to review was excellent and I would like to thank the Deputy School Manager [REDACTED] for her efforts to provide easy access to exam material (hard copy as well as pdfs). The memory stick provided at the start of the visit was very useful and material that wasn't provided was readily available on request.

Although access to most marking material was provided before the visit via the LearningCentral site, a selection of Final Year Report dissertations (BI3001 and BI4001) was only available on the visit days. For the next visit I would like to suggest to have earlier access to these reports as they require significant reading time.

In addition, I haven't had the chance yet to meet with students and I would like for this to be arranged at (or before) the next visit.

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

The Biosciences degree programme at Cardiff University shows good practice in learning, teaching and assessment. It provides a wide range of modules and teaching methods and I am especially impressed by the feedback provided by the academic staff as evidenced by the detailed annotation of the exam scripts, course work and dissertations.

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?			N/A
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

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