



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	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:	BSc Optometry		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-13	Date of Report:	14 <sup>th</sup> 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

The Optometry degree programme at Cardiff University provides the necessary training for graduates to embark upon careers as professional Optometrists who will, following successful completion of a pre-registration year, achieve registered status with the General Optical Council (GOC).

It is a well structured course that provides the basic scientific, clinical and legal knowledge that will be utilised by the students throughout their professional careers and is approved by the GOC.

### 2. Academic Standards

The academic standards of Optometry course are of a high calibre and compare very favourably with degree programmes at other UK universities. The students themselves perform at, or above levels, exhibited by students at other universities. The ablest students on the Cardiff course display a very high level of ability and attainment.

### **3. The Assessment Process**

Overall, the assessment methods appear to be entirely appropriate and utilise a range of assessment strategies; practical assessments, oral vivas, written coursework and written exams which are all deployed to good effect.

I examined numerous exam scripts, projects, clinical logbooks etc. and the marking of these assessments appeared to me very rigorous and was carried out in line with the module learning objectives and to well-defined, appropriate marking schemes.

In terms of the volume of assessment perhaps the only comment I have to make relates to word limit for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year research project which currently sits at 15,000 words. Whilst I appreciate this is an *upper* limit, nonetheless a number of the dissertations I looked at reached this limit and were often up to 100 pages long! This strikes me as a large volume of work for a 20 credit module. Many of the project write ups could have been more succinct and improved in terms of their focus by cutting this upper limit to a lower value, perhaps to 7000 – 8000 words. This would be more in line with equivalent research project modules at other UK universities and would also reduce the burden on staff in terms of marking.

### **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

This is my first year as an external examiner and I was struck by the very high module mean marks achieved in some 3<sup>rd</sup> year subjects. Two in particular caught my eye:

1. *OP3205 Occupational Optometry & Law* (mean = 71; s.d. = 7)

The high mean and relatively low s.d. suggest that this paper is not really discriminating well between the more able and less able students and perhaps this needs to be looked at next year.

2. *OP3106 Visual Perception* (mean = 69; s.d. = 13)

I thought the style of short answer questions on this paper in retrospect were a little too basic for a level 3 module. There were a lot of '*list*', '*describe*', '*define*' type questions, and whilst these are perfectly appropriate for assessing knowledge acquisition in level 1 and level and level 2 modules, I would have expected a higher level of understanding to be assessed at this stage.

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

I found the External Examiner Handbook useful in outlining the roles and responsibilities.

Having an experienced and able existing External Examiner working alongside me was perhaps the most useful aspect in terms of preparation for the task. In advance of the visit to the School of Optometry he was able to guide and advise me in terms of what to expect and do - for which I am very grateful.

## **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

I particularly liked the style of the paper for OP3101 Optometric Practice – the style of which, using ‘real’ case records, I thought was an excellent way of assessing clinical analytical skills to a high level.

## **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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
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?  <i>We received no feedback on the comments made on the exam scripts.</i>		x	
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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		
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?  <i>We did not really get the chance to assess this.</i>			x
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	x		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				
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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
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](mailto: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