



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Philip J. R. Day		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Manchester		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc Biomolecular Sciences		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	27 <sup>th</sup> July 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 content and structure of the programme continues to achieve its aims and learning outcomes. Examiners discussed the structural complexity of the degree programmes and UoC personnel also agreed that the degree structure should be addressed and simplified. The current complex course structure could risk collapse given the loss of key personnel. The graduate entry medicine (GEM) is highly subscribed and only three places were offered this year. Some clarification may be required so that students who apply to the GEM appreciate the likelihood of a place being offered to them.

### 2. Academic Standards

Once more external examiners were united in their opinion that the distribution of student standards included students who would rank similarly within the higher UK universities. I did not interview students this year. The report from the examiner who interviewed students this year suggested that students were generally happy with the content of the course. There is a concern that last year the standards panel did not communicate with module leads.

### 3. The Assessment Process

Once again very thorough and scrutinizing was performed to a high standard. Overall the marking process is cumbersome and too complex, requiring simplification that will become an important factor as student numbers soon will increase to over 440. Without increases to academic numbers the current processes may fail, or the processes themselves need to be overhauled - which better reflects my recommendation.

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

Still a complicated assessment structure is in place. Promises to increase bioinformatics for 2015/6 were marginally evident but once again there is little evidence of significant bioinformatics being taught in the current degree curricula.

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

N/A.

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

Student projects were closely inspected this year and I was impressed by how supervisory staff were able to generate a high number of stimulating projects and many studies were performed to a very high standard. The increasing student numbers may make the maintenance of high standards of the final year research projects more challenging, although there is held an opinion that if projects are shared out equally across staff that there will not be a high burden on individuals, although this remains to be seen as it assumes potential supervisory staff have untapped capacity for more student supervision.

Scrutinizing is performed very well indeed. The use of abbreviated standards to assist the assessment of where information has been derived does help to simplify essay marking and checking, readily justifying the awarding of marks, and probably contributes to the solid checking process.

#### **7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

This post has been an extremely enjoyable experience. Throughout the entirety of my appointment the support offered by administrators and good communication shared by admin and academic staff has been admirable. The examination procedure adopted has been transparent but so many degree options and the very complex degree structures and assessment processes has not simplified during my time as external examiner. The improvement in marking and banding has been a logical and good step forward. I still have concerns about a need to increase investment in computational facilities and believe further that these degree courses should have a 'compulsory' basic bioinformatics module with options for more advanced study. Personnel argue this exists but I am not convinced. A review of the degrees/degree content on offer would help to reduce some of the complexities and further align the training to current requirements of lifescience-based professionals and requirements to start higher degrees.

**8.2 Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?** We were informed of changes and not to pass comment, other than summaries in this report.

**8.16 Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?** Given the time available it is clearly obvious that a thorough assessment of assessed work cannot be carried out by individual examiners, so we tended to work together to try and cover all aspects of the examination processes and discussed amongst ourselves key matters arising.

## 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?	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		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	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>				

		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		
<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