



## 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:	Prof Stephen Allen		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Royal Bournemouth Hospital		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MSc in Ageing, Health and Disease		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/15	Date of Report:	16/7/16

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 course has an established and thoughtfully refined structure and content. The course is sensibly spread for both part-time students (the majority) and full timers. A recent minor change to the required number of written submissions has clearly had no detrimental effect on the integrity of assessment. The course content is entirely appropriate and reflects that of similar courses at other UK Universities (such as Keele and Salford). The course is administered well, with effective leadership, an efficient manager and enthusiastic board. Effective arrangements are in place for supervision and advice, and the board has sound procedures for taking into account mitigating circumstances.

### 2. Academic Standards

The M standard is maintained across the course. This is reflected in the guidance for candidates, the feedback they receive from written submissions, the marks given, and the standard expected for dissertations. There is constructive and formative support at all stages to enable candidates to understand and attain the M standard. It is clear that the board is properly vigilant with regard to standards.

### 3. The Assessment Process

The current process for assessment is in keeping with the purpose of the course. It covers the course content adequately. The board has decided to continue to double mark all assignments and dissertations (though only required by the university to

double mark a 25% sample) as this does not cause an unreasonable burden for markers and provides an additional layer of quality assurance. Markers are experienced, have clear marking guidelines and a good understanding of the M standard.

A pilot project has been conducted to explore the potential for using multiple choice (single best answer) questions as part of the assessment process for this course. A 20-question paper was taken by candidates this year. I have no objection in principle to the use of MCQs for assessment at postgraduate level. However, I have considerable reservations about MCQs for small numbers of candidates using low numbers of questions. From my experience as an MCQ board member at the Royal College of Physicians, and as an external examiner for Final MB at the University of Leeds, I am aware of the difficulties with MCQ exam metrics. To achieve a satisfactory alpha coefficient ( $>0.8$  and preferably  $>0.9$ ) as a measure of reliability it is usually necessary to set an exam with at least 100, and more likely 200 questions, and statistically sound post hoc adjustments usually require at least 50 candidates. Further, the process of question writing, standard setting and question bank maintenance is expensive and time-consuming when done properly. For these reasons I recommend that MCQ methods of assessment should be restricted to the generic parts of the course, such as research methodology, that would allow sufficient numbers, drawn from several courses, to use MCQs reliably.

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

This was my first main exam board. I attended a dissertation exam board earlier in the year. Therefore, I am not able to make year-on-year comments at this stage.

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

The written materials were clear and sufficient. Attendance at a new external examiners' induction in Cardiff was offered. I have also drawn on my previous experience at other universities.

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

The decision of the board to continue double marking to assure the quality of marking is sound practice.

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

Not applicable.

## 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