



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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|---|--|-----------------|---------|
| | For completion by External Examiner: | | |
| Name of External Examiner: | Dr Jeni Harden | | |
| Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner: | University of Edinburgh | | |
| Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report: | Professional Doctorate (Social Sciences) | | |
| Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report: | 2016-2017 | Date of Report: | 26/5/17 |

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 modules I examined fit well within the programme and offer interesting and relevant choices that prepare the students well for the thesis stage.

2. Academic Standards

Overall the academic standards were appropriate for the degree and stage within the degree and there were some very good pieces of work. However there were also areas of weakness that were noted:

- Lack of critical engagement in concepts particularly among weaker students
- Amongst the weaker students there was also a lack of significant improvement from draft stage to final submission despite the very detailed comments provided.

3. The Assessment Process

On the whole I felt that the assessment process was thorough and appropriate for the level within both modules. The feedback provided very useful comments at both the draft and final submission stage. It was very interesting to see the development in (some) of the students' work from draft to final submission. Marking criteria were consistently applied. This year I received verbal information regarding the marking process. It may be useful to consider including some detail on this in the information given to the external examiner, outlining how the markers reached agreement on the final mark - for example that the module organiser was aware that the students had been taught a particular topic and so had higher expectations.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Issues mentioned in previous years have been addressed. The administrative team continue to do a fantastic job in preparing materials in advance of the exam boards.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

- The quality of the feedback given to students in particular at the formative draft stage remains very high.
- Communication from the administrative team and the preparation of the papers for the board continues to be excellent.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I have been consistently impressed by the organisation and administration of the programme. The administrative and programme team always ensured that coursework samples reached me in advance of the boards and the processes at the boards were always conducted in an appropriate manner.

This programme is an important option for those that a traditional PhD may not entirely suit. The courses for which I was external examiner were interesting, well considered in their content and from student feedback I can see that they are well received by the students. This can be a challenging group given their diverse backgrounds and often complex lives with competing demands on their time. The team handle those challenges well, offering considerable support through formative assessments and allowing the students some flexibility in their progression through the programme.

A couple of points to think about:

I rarely had the opportunity to meet with the course organisers. I realise that this is not always possible and probably not necessary every year but this may have been useful at some point and allowed a conversation about the courses including plans for development, challenges etc, to be held out with the formal exam boards. This may be something to consider for the next examiner.

As mentioned in previous annual reports I would have found it useful to have a clearer understanding of how the 2 markers arrived at the final decision. We use a form that indicates the basis for the agreement of the final mark so this is clear for the external examiner.

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? | x | | |
| 8.2 | Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme? | | x | |
| Draft Examination Question Papers | | | | |
| 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 |
| 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? | | | 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 |
| Coursework and Practical Assessments | | | | |
| 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 | | |
| Clinical Examinations (if applicable) | | | | |
| 8.15 | Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments? | | | x |
| Sampling of Work | | | | |
| 8.16 | Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work? | x | | |
| Examining Board Meeting | | | | |

| | | 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 | | |
| 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? | | | 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

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