



From last year:

EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Sally Findlow		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Keele University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	EdD		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-16	Date of Report:	November 2016

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

1. Programme Structure

As I explained last year, I like the freedom students get to choose between modules. I liked the module aims, appropriate except for where some module aims did not seem to be Level 8 ones. I discussed this last year with the programme director and understand these were amended. But my reservation about ILOs remains: (all 'Demonstrate knowledge of ...') seem to be quite a long way from Level 7 ones. For instance, 'Quantitative Research Methods', the ILOs are sub-level 7 or even 5 or 6: "Demonstrate understanding ...". I'd have thought these need re-looking at. Last year I also raised for consideration the lack of pilot study and progression panel (which can be helpful in making the transition between submitting assigned essays and independent research) .

2. Academic Standards

The standards of work are consistent with those on other programmes in my experience. Continued persistent weaknesses in the work are: levels of precision, use/application of theory and developing an argument, with critical analysis or discussion sacrificed in favour of coverage of material. Properly benchmarked ILOs that are reflected in both marking criteria and essay titles might help students develop the ability to argue critically. It was also possible to see a lack of ability to write properly structured paragraphs. There was over-use of one-sentence paragraphs (often not well connected to the preceding one). The evident difficulty students are having one way or another in using theory made me wonder what guidance they get on:

- a) What the right balance is (at least in the form of assessment criteria), and
- b) How to go about achieving this.

For instance, are they shown good examples of work? These are fairly typical difficulties among students transitioning into doctoral level work, and the team might like to consider how to address them.

3. The Assessment Process

As I said last year, I really like the practice of submitting drafts – it seems to make a good difference to the final standard of work produced as well as encouraging students to think of writing as a fluid process. The best draft feedback was that which made concrete recommendations - for either further reading, or identifying gaps in coverage of issues or the practical application of those issues. Marks in my view were fair overall. There was broad internal consistency among the range of marks in individual modules. However, there was one essay that was awarded 78%. I could not see what the criteria were for this high mark. As a Level 7 piece of work it was lacking. Another essay was awarded a very generous 65%, for a piece of work that again had no argument at all and was more an impressionistic mishmash of un-sourced and un-referenced ideas. Another essay was awarded 62% for a piece of work that was quite well argued, though it lacked supporting detail. And a fourth was awarded a high 72% for work that was overly theoretical – not, in my view, in the way that the feedback suggested (too much theory) but rather because this theory was not applied at all. As I suggested before, clearer criterion referencing (criteria matching the published ILOs) could help? Finally, I wondered what became of my suggestion about in-text notation to the drafts? Regarding 'Quantitative Research Methods', perhaps it was the nature of this module that the approach to feedback was more atomistic (less holistic) than for other modules, and perhaps this is helpful to the students who have chosen this module? I wonder how far this helps students apply the skills learned to larger pieces of policy or practice-related critical work.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

See above, item 1 re ILOs at levels 7 or 8

See above item 3: re clearer criterion referencing (criteria matching the published ILOs) could help and my suggestion last year about in-text notation to the drafts?

The practice of students to develop their own essay titles: I wondered last year if it might be easier to 'help' students into engaging at the right level in debates if titles were provided instead by the course team. I wonder what came of the suggestion?

I asked in my previous report whether re-framing essay titles as questions would help force students into engaging critically – Did anything come of this?

I wasn't sure about links between modules – Changing Contexts of Ed and Changing Modes of Professionalism, for instance – would be nice (as I pointed out last year) if students are encouraged to make explicit links.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Course materials and documentation were very well presented (though perhaps not all the clipping and plastic wallets are necessary?) Unfortunately I was not able to attend the exam board as I was running our own two-day Profdoc residential.

I really like the system of compulsory, formal 'draft' submission. As I said last year, I wish we were able to apply such a rule. Feedback is thorough and builds well on the draft feedback, although the way this was done differed substantially between the two modules I have just seen: Quantitative Research Methods and Changing Contexts of Education (I wondered if students say anything about this – ours would!)

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 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	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
Marking 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?			N/A
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
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?		N	
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			N/A
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?			N/A

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?			
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
9.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			

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:

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Cardiff, CF24 0DE