



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Jenny Fleming		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Southampton		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BA/BSc in Criminology SIO201 Offending and Victimisation SIO200 Theory and Method in Contemporary Criminology SIO202 Responses to Crime SIO203 Prison and Community Sanctions SIO131 Dissertation S10204 Criminological Practice S10263 Policing: Theory, Evidence and Policy SIO184 Diversity, Crime and Criminal Justice		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016/2017	Date of Report:	July 2017

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught stage** Examining Board in the case of **postgraduate Master's programmes**).

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure – I agree with the previous examiner that the 'programme overall is coherent and contemporary'. It will be interesting as the new external examiner to see how the new structures (from 'long skinny courses to short stubby courses') over the coming years will impact on this.

2. Academic Standards I am advised that the programme meets the Criminology Benchmark Statement (QAA, 2014) and the standards set in the descriptors for relevant levels in the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (QAA, 2014). I am not sure I can comment on comparable standards with other HEIs in this my first year as external examiner.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level).

I was not familiar with examining 'long, skinny courses' and it took some time to realise that there were no mid-term assessments and that multiple choice exams were used. Having looked closely at seven separate courses and a range of dissertations I have two main observations on feedback and multiple choice assessment:

Overall, I felt that the feedback to students was largely inconsistent across the various courses. My feedback to the individual Convenors of the courses identified specific instances and examples where I thought the feedback had been exemplary and at other junctures where the feedback was largely uninformative. Good practice is to advise students the strengths of their work and where they have excelled – and then to move to providing information as to how they could have improved their mark. This is particularly important in first and second year, but equally third years still (in the main) have an interest in how their work has been received. It is not enough to give a student a, for example, 68 – without telling that student how they could have got an 88. Similarly, if a student gets a, for example, 45 it is important for them to know why such a low mark was awarded. I am not an advocate of check lists for feedback – my own view is that students should be advised about the strengths and then advised on how they could have earned a better mark. There is always room for extra comments following this if required. Students frequently compare their work and it is important I believe that feedback narratives are consistent.

I am in favour of markers using the whole range of marks available to them. In most cases I am pleased to say that this was the case for the majority of the courses. Some however did not venture past the 75 (or thereabouts) mark and while this of course may be legitimate – there was little indication as to why this was the case.

Exam feedback to students was almost non-existent. I had to read the exams in some instances just to get a sense of the overall marking standard. Very little on exam scripts and sometimes only one mark on the front of the script which did not give me any sense of the breakdown of the mark. At the University of Southampton we have recently introduced a 7 letter system for exam marking – so for example:

M = Needs more evidence of study from reading to support task response
N = Needs more theory to support task response
O = Needs more evidence to support task response
P = Needs more modular content/comprehension of module
Z = Needs more clarity
X = Incorrect
S = Too brief
R = May be stronger with referencing

The codes are strange at first sight, but avoid encultured classifications such as "A" or "B" or "C" and they avoid codes that could be misread by rapid or unclear handwriting. The process also allows higher quality Moderation (an important aspect of quality marking) by allowing the Moderator to follow through the First Marker and Module expectations more closely. It takes no more time to use a code to mark as well as a tick system and in the short time we have been using it has proved useful. We largely introduced this because of an increasing tendency for students to ask to meet with their personal tutor to discuss their exam script and mark. This often proved difficult, given that the personal tutor probably did not mark it and inevitably there was little to no comment on the end of the script.

I am not necessarily advocating this for Cardiff – I merely observe that it would be easier for External Examiners (and moderators) to have a clearer understanding how exam marks are arrived at.

My final observation concerns the use of multiple choice assessment for third year students particularly. While I appreciate that in the long skinny courses multiple choice exams are used at the end of the year and have often been preceded by seminar exercises (from discussion with staff prior to the Board meeting) – the exam is still worth 100% and I am of the view that pedagogically it does not test a student's understanding and grasp of the learning outcomes sufficiently. There is little more to be said on this – your move to single semester courses may change this form of assessment – we shall see – but I would need to be persuaded that this form of assessment should be used as the central means by which a student is assessed on a particular course.

Overall however, I liked the assessment choice for students in most courses and thought the range of dissertation titles was particularly innovative.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

I did not receive a copy of my predecessor's report and only realised it was available online when I came to do the annual report. I concur with the previous examiner's observations about the 'variability in the quantity and quality of feedback on assessed coursework'. I also have comments to make about the lack of information provided on exam scripts – see above.

5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)

This was excellent – the staff were helpful, patient and the online availability of papers and forms was useful. The provision of the previous External Examiner's Report would have been useful earlier – but as it turned out I identified similar issues and perhaps this makes the feedback to the University more useful.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

The various assessments seemed to test student learning and achievement rigorously and fairly and they were conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations. Prior to the Exam Board I had a very productive conversation with Criminology staff about practice, assessment and learning objectives at different year stages. In terms of this Report, my second year as Examiner may be able to comment more fully here – as I get a stronger sense of the pedagogy culture and the rationale for curriculum design and assessment practice.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (N/A)

N/A

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?	√		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		√	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	√		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	√		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	√		
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?	√		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	√		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	√		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	√		
8.10	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				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	√		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	√		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	√		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	√		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			√
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			√
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	√		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	√		

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?	√		
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?	√		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	√		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	√		
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			√
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			√
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			√
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			√
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			√
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			√
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			√
8.30	Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i>			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:

externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE