

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:	Prof. Dominic Campopiano		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Edinburgh		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc in Biological Chemistry		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017-18	Date of Report:	24/09/218

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 (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

This is my 1st year acting as external examiner. I am impressed by the content of the course – students are taught advanced material on an incredibly broad range of topics across biological chemistry – from synthetic organic chemistry, enzyme mechanism, biocatalysis, natural product biosynthesis, protein isolation and molecular biology. Students take modules out of a selection offered to other courses – core and optional.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

There is evidence of advanced material here, taught at Masters level. At Edinburgh we run similar Masters courses in Medicine & Biological Chemistry and this is comparable.

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

I received the exam questions and model answers in good time (although in some cases under separate post). These were of high quality – I gained electronic access to some lecture material (sometimes difficult to navigate through course structure, see below) and this gave me an insight into what was taught. The students are asked to attempt 3 from 4 questions in 2 hours which is fair. At my visit at the June exam board I got to see the exam scripts and these were fairly marked with clear annotations of marks and comments justifying these.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

At my first June exam board visit it was useful to get my head around all the different examined elements of the course – there are 13 including the project. At my follow up visit in September I was given an overview of the modules an MSc student would take. This helped a great deal.

In June we met ~6-8 students across various courses Masters and MSc degrees mainly from the MSc in Catalysis. The “home” students gave very +ve feedback of the courses and material. There is no doubt it helps being a Cardiff or UK student. They highlighted some timetabling clashes that should be sorted out in future since it appeared to exclude course combinations. The two foreign students we met felt a little but lost when they first arrived and this could be remedied with more one to one contact in those first crucial weeks.

Seven students took the 2018 block of exams I saw grades for at the June exam board. There was one outstanding student, one fairly good student but the others appeared to have failed at least 3 or 4 modules. Two were interrupted and two withdrawn. The entrance qualifications of these students may be a factor here.

At the September board I saw exam papers and scripts for two students. Both passed well. I noted that one student had gone from a 36% fail in Biocatalysis 1 to an 80% pass at the resit. It was explained that this grade would be capped at 50% - a University rule - this a pity since this student was clearly now showing great understanding of this material. It is worth asking – what had changed between exams?

I saw a Project report for one student (grade 54) and the marking was fair and appropriate and I looked at a similar biological project from the Medicinal Chemistry course (grade 68) for comparison.

The excellent student from the June board has been deferred and I look forward to their project report.

5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

I am getting my head around all the elements in this MSc. As mentioned above I received the exam Qs and As in good time (Nov 2017) but I would ask you to adopt a standard pro forma/template for model answers. I liked the use of clear red/back text in the Biocatalysis 1 module for Qs and As. The layout of the modules within a course helped.

At my home institution we don't have resits for our Masters courses and I would say it must be difficult to keep track of the students across cohorts - you do very well to manage this, giving students as much opportunity to pass.

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

None so far.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

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?	Y		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		N	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?	Y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		

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?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
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?	Y		
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?	Y		
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?	Y		
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?		N	
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