

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

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Alistair Warren		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Nottingham		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BSc in Biomedical Sciences and the BSc in Biomedical Sciences (Intercalated) (Anatomy)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-2019	Date of Report:	21st June 2019

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation 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 General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

The new course continues to make good progress, with BIOSI202 now fully in place. Some points on programme structure are also covered below but in summary, running fewer large modules instead of many small ones is a major enhancement in my view. Successful introduction of the Masters is a second success story. The split in assessment: 60% exam and 40% course work for each module, has some merit. It also has potential to increase overall marks for each module because course work often scores higher than unseen exams. The staff are well aware of this issue and I understand they are monitoring the marks.

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

Both student attainment and standards remain high. Academic standards match other universities in the UK and teaching quality in Cardiff is good.

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

Staff continue to conduct assessments with rigour and care. Learning Outcomes align with the assessments; the format and style of assessments is appropriate to the course. Variations in student attainment occur between modules and types of assessment, but this is well within normal expectations and this variation appears to be less for the modules I reviewed this year than it was previously.

4. **Examination of master's Dissertations (if applicable)** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

N/A

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

Continuing efforts are being made by the university to move towards a 'single source of truth' for student data. This seems an eminently sensible ambition. However it demands resources to make such a system work effectively and also a clear understanding of the needs of the School and External Examiners in order to provide the relevant information in a timely manner and suitable format. In previous reports I have commented about the provision of numerical information to External Examiners, but the topic has not been addressed satisfactorily in responses from the university. I have copied, again, my comments for this section, from my 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-2018 reports as I believe they still apply and remain unaddressed.

"The following is an extract from my report from last year (2016/17), some of which run on from the previous year also (2015/16) that still seem to apply:

"Support from academic and administrative staff was excellent and the briefing early in my visit was very useful. As noted last year, early access to a comprehensive spread sheet of marks from all components of the assessment to include each student would be very helpful.

2 Updated June 2018

Large sheets of data were provided but these were not generally very 'user-friendly'. Ideally a simple spreadsheet format, as discussed last year, would be preferred. I understand there are limitations in the centralised software that make this difficult to obtain. This point was also made last year and, the response from the Academic Registrar (27th February 2017) indicated departments have access to a 'suite of reports.....to meet the requirements of their Examining Boards.'" However, this does not seem to be the case as departmental staff spent a considerable amount of time in an effort to provide the information that the Externals felt was helpful because it does not appear to be available centrally....

....I recognise, and endorse, the need for robust quality assurance processes that are monitored and are equivalent between areas of the institution. However there seems to be a need for some of these issues to be clarified, perhaps through discussion between the relevant areas (Registry and Departmental staff?) to clarify exactly what is possible through the 'Student information Lifecycle project' and how the information requested by Externals might best be provided within the very tight timescale at this time of year....

....I also recognise the point made at the Examination Board that Registry staffing has been under some pressure."

The QAA UK Quality Code, Chapter 7 Indicator 10, says:

“Degree-awarding bodies provide external examiners with sufficient evidence to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.”

As I stated in the Examination Board of 20th June 2019, and reaffirm here, currently I have full confidence this is achieved at Cardiff. However, it relies on the sterling work of the School staff and without resource to ensure adequate and accurate SIMS reports can be guaranteed in a timely manner from the Centre this has potential to become a risk.

6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

N/A

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

The move from many small modules to fewer large ones is commended for both student experience (better integration of learning) and the reduction in student contact time (to allow students more time for independent learning) and ultimately a reduction in staff workload.

I welcome the investment in a large computer facility (eLEAF). Hopefully students will find this helpful in their studies and it may encourage staff to explore more on-line assessments in the future. The use of a common rubric for on-line assessments appears to be successful and worthy of further evaluation.

Changes to final year projects appear to have been received well by both students and at least some staff.

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

Over my tenure I have seen several significant enhancements in the course, with BIOSI2020 and introduction of the master's being the most impressive. These on-going enhancements demonstrate the School's commitment to curriculum development, an awareness of the changing higher education environment and the evolving needs of students. The Course Team have shown engagement and responsiveness to comments from External Examiners and have made heroic efforts to develop modules for the new course. They have given freely of their time to answer questions, to explain the local environment and to discuss longer-term developments.

As noted earlier, the move to a 'single source of truth' for student data is laudable. However, such a transformational change needs to be resourced adequately and be responsive to School needs and requirements. Future Externals may wish to continue to monitor this issue and particularly any potential impact it might have on quality assurance of the course.

After such a period of change it seems appropriate to have a time for consolidation and reflection and to evaluate the changes and explore student and staff responses to them.

9. 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				
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?	Y		
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	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				
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?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
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?	Y		
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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