



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Graeme SMALL		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Durham University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MA in History/MA in Ancient and Medieval Warfare/MA in Medieval British Studies/MA History of the Crusades		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-2014	Date of Report:	13 August 2014

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

All programmes use the tried-and-tested format of Core courses, optional modules and dissertation. This format is entirely fit for purpose and allows a good range of student choice, specialisation and tailored research training, where required.

2. Academic Standards

The standards are high and in line with my experience of teaching or external examining at MA level at 7 UK universities.

There is clear progression from senior undergraduate level to the standard of work required at PGT level, and the work done is sufficiently challenging to prepare students for the rigours of PGR work, where that will be required (in MA in Ancient and Medieval Warfare, for example, some assignments dealt with issues such as the manuscript traditions of the source material).

3. The Assessment Process

Robust and fair. I was particularly impressed by the evidence of an exchange of views and a thorough discussion of student work between first and second markers, especially in 'Approaches to Medieval History' and 'Aspects of the Crusades' on the MA in History.

As ever, I would encourage colleagues to ensure grades and comments map accurately onto one another: a piece of work awarded a Merit grade should be described as 'very good' rather than 'excellent'.

The exam board is a composite bringing together staff from across SHARE. This does mean that a lot of the deliberations on the day are of no relevance to an external in a given area, and it would be good if some thought could be given to rationalising attendance at the board.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

In the MA in History module entitled 'Approaches to History', it would be useful to have a specially designed feedback form to take account of the rather particular demands of putting together a palaeography portfolio.

In the MA in History module entitled 'Skills for Historical Research', I wonder whether the exercise might be a little longer to bring the assessment into line with some other modules. I would suggest that colleagues consider a 3.000 word piece.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The core elements serve effectively for research preparation at PGT and PGR level, and I particularly commend the commitment to a Paleography course and the possibility of language options for the MA in History.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

The Cardiff MA programmes are flexible, research-preparation degrees which maximise student choice and allow specialisations to develop. The standards are high and appropriate to level. The numbers on the courses are relatively small, and the department may at some stage come under pressure to consider the viability of these programmes. The answer here must be that to present a credible case to the AHRC and other public funders of PGR, we need robust, flexible MA programmes that are fit for purpose. The University's support services (international office, marketing) need to be enlisted to explore the potential for expanding student recruitment.

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?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?	Y		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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