



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	C V Horie		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Collection Care and Conservation Consultant		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MSc Conservation		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/15	Date of Report:	4/7/2015

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:** The BSc and MSc courses are interleaved for efficiency in teaching. This model works well as it maintains vibrant group dynamics and enables interplay between cohorts. MSc course is well balanced between academic teaching, scholarship, practical research, conservation experience and diverse reporting methods. The continual input and critical assessment of students by staff contributes to steady improvements in approach and achievement as seen in the course work and portfolios. It has been good to see steady improvement in the tools and resources (departmental and university wide) available to students, getting them used to thinking about opportunities outside their immediate experience.
- 2. Academic Standards:** The quality of work achieved by the best students is exemplary and a credit to the process of selection and development of students. The range of achievement across the MSc cohort appears reasonable.
- 3. The Assessment Process:** The MSc Conservation students are thoroughly assessed, formative and summative, using many and contrasting student outputs, from standard written essays and examinations, through presentations and scenario proposals, to practical research and conservation projects. Conservation is a vocational activity, so there is a need to include in the formal assessment process a greater weight on the conservation process and practical outcomes and proportionally less on academic criteria. This is particularly noticeable for the middle ranking students who will be judged in their future careers mainly by their vocational as opposed to their academic skills. Any potential changes in assessment criteria should reflect these differences.

The feedback to students on submitted work is expansive and thorough, more than most comparable courses. It may be worth comparing the relative merits of this form of feedback to more succinct or structured forms. It might also be useful to include a developmental and mentoring component in the feedback to help those graduates aiming to progress into conservation as a career, guiding their forward planning.

4. Year-on-Year Comments: There have been some minor improvements to the course and assessment process. Standards have been maintained. The course and staff work well together with their various strengths creating a good productive atmosphere. Although the practical teaching stresses the whole life of an object, this is not usually reflected in the object record, where, as a potential employer, I would expect the student to outline the whole process, including recommendations to the owner for storage, further treatment etc. These reports do not appear in the project notebook and it would be useful for the examiner to see the completed documentation.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement: This course is unusual and valuable in the UK by including practical conservation as a major component - thoroughly taught and assessed in-house. It takes time, resources and effort to train the eye, the hand and brain to work together. Cardiff has developed a critical and reflective approach to practice which serves both the individual and conservation more generally very well. Many other courses have eliminated or outsourced this component to museums and the like which have little expertise in integrating learning with practice. It would be useful for the department and university to make more of its alumni in promoting the quality of the course and products.

Staff are involved in research, consultancies and development of national and international professional standards. It has been good to see these considerable efforts to improve the state of the art reflected in teaching, and then carried into improved insights demonstrated in students' work.

The diversity of courses with their different approaches is leading to confusion of expectations in employers about graduate capability. It would be useful to consider whether a QAA benchmarking process would reduce the confusion by spelling out what a UK degree in conservation means. This should assist graduates (UK and foreign) aiming to progress into conservation as a career who must negotiate with their national professional bodies for entry onto the professional ladder.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only): The course is well run. Through my three years as an External Examiner, I have been impressed by the quality of education, support for students and the quality of the emerging graduates. The staff has responded appropriately to my queries and suggestions. The administrative support for the external examiner has also been seamless and coped with the inevitable hitches in timetable and postal systems.

The welcome of the department to a critical friend has made this task an enjoyable one. It has been interesting and made rewarding by the enthusiasm and commitment to quality of you all. It is always invigorating working with people who care.

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?	y		
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?			y
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	y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
	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?	y		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				y
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?			

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