



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Emma Uprichard		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Warwick		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc Sociology <i>Sociology and Social Sciences modules on undergraduate programmes</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	27 Sept 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 programme is excellent. It continues to adhere to the high quality standards that are expected by a Russell Group university set in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and international sociology subject benchmarks.
- I examined core modules and I was especially pleased with the content and level of learning expected on those modules. The degree is impressive in its capacity to teach key issues that have been longstanding issues in Sociology (e.g. theory, work, etc.) and at the same time incorporate newer issues into the programme as well (digital methods, childhood etc.). This mixture of 'old' and 'new' is excellent and one that I think Cardiff can be proud of.
- My impression of the degree based on what I have seen is that this is a forward-facing programme. It is driven by high quality teaching and research, student experience and employability and is building what look like sustainable teaching and learning strategies for the future.

2. Academic Standards

- I am impressed by both the depth and breadth of the programme. There is a good coverage of 'core' module as well as optional modules. Over the course of the degree, students gain an excellent grounding in sociology and are pushed to

developed their own independent thinking on contemporary issues of sociological concern.

- The academic standards across all modules I saw was excellent.
- By only seeing a few modules, it is difficult to get a sense of the programme overall. It might be useful to have two or three real students – almost like case studies – given to the external at the start of their term, so that he or she can follow individual students throughout their degree. This would allow externals to gain a sense of both the real depth and breadth of the degree overall, as well as potentially pick up on issues to do with mitigation etc, depending on the student's individual trajectory.
- Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, medians and standard deviations) across modules would be good to have ahead of the board meeting.

3. The Assessment Process (including dissertations, if appropriate)

- The assessment process appears to be fair and rigorous. Rules and regulations were consistently applied and decisions seemed to be made sensibly and fairly.
- But the assessment process for the degree classifications is very top down. I wasn't really sure what the purpose of the external was at times, or even of the board members, since almost all decisions are made by the institutional regulations. This isn't a criticism but it is just an observation.
- There is excellent transparency throughout assessment procedures.
- Only one module had a 'moderator report' where the first marker had summed up what they'd done and passed this over to the moderator. Seeing this 'discussion' was excellent. It would be good if this could be done across all modules.
- Where there was mitigation or unusual assessment outcomes (e.g. missing marks), the same rules were applied across all cases. This provided a very strong sense of student equity across the different programmes.
- I saw mostly quantitative dissertations and felt overall that the marks might have been more generous. What exactly are students being marked on in dissertations? Synthesising work or practical empirical work? If both, then they may need more help to go beyond description. But they also need to be given credit for engaging with variables meaningfully too.
- The Chair of the board does an excellent job at 'holding the meeting', encouraging discussion, and explaining the university examination regulations.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

- Learning Central is very difficult and confusing for me. It would be easier if ALL assessment of a module was EITHER online OR offline. The mix is confusing.
- I think external should have 'view only' rights on Learning Central.
- It's good to see modules year-on-year. But I am still not very able to see the 'big picture' in terms of marking and marks awarded across markers/modules/years/programmes etc.
- It is to both the students' and the School's advantage to venture up to the 80%-90%+ mark range for the best quality work. In most instances, this is unlikely to change the degree classification. But since the degree is based on the absolute average – from 0 to 100, it is important to raise the marks in the marks, especially in the 70-100 range. To do this, markers might be encouraged to award only 75, 80, 85, 90 marks in the upper band. This would ensure equity among what is

considered a 'high' or 'mid' 1st class so as to safeguard that the *qualitative/categorical* value of the work overall.

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

N/A.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

- Markers might be encouraged to use higher scores in the first class band. I do worry that, given the way that the degree classification is calculated, that the best students are missing out on receiving best degree outcomes.
- There's a sense that good assessment procedures are in place and there is equity within modules. It's more difficult to gauge equity across modules, but that is mainly because I didn't have access to all the modules.
- It would be good to be clearer on what are 'required' or 'core' modules on particular degrees and indeed what the implications are of these decisions.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?		N	
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				

		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?		N	
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:

Quality and Standards, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE