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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Marcello Riggio		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Glasgow		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BDS (Part 2A) – Oral Ecosystems (year 2; DE2001)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017-2018	Date of Report:	03/08/2018

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board.

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)

Oral Ecosystems is one of three themes in year 2 of the BDS curriculum (the others are Foundation and Clinical Dentistry), and collectively contribute to the Primary BDS Part 2 examination.

The programme structure and content are very good, with a wide range of summative assessment methods (see section 2) being utilised (essays, MSA, practical, coursework). This ensures that a wide depth and breadth of knowledge is assessed.

Students are exposed to a wide range of high quality teaching and learning method

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

- I assessed the first diet of examinations on 29th June 2018, and had an opportunity to look at a variety of exam scripts (especially for borderline and just failing candidates). The number of failing candidates for each course assessment was as follows:

- Poster Presentation Project: 3
 - Extended Essay: 11
 - Basic Sciences ICA: 22
 - Oral Ecosystems ICA: 9
 - Oral Ecosystems (written paper): 8
 - Basic Sciences (written paper): 4
 - PBL 1: 0
 - PBL 2: 0
 - Clinical: 0
 - Practical: 1
- It was refreshing to find that no students failed PBL 1, PBL 2 or the Clinical paper and only one failed the Practical assessment.
 - Two students failed both written papers. The performance of one student was exceptionally poor, achieving 0% for the Basic Sciences written paper, 3% for the Oral Ecosystems written paper and 29% for the Extended Essay, yet achieved 75% for the Poster Presentation Project. This student did not attend the ICA exams and attempted to submit attenuating circumstances, which was quite rightly rejected as this was submitted too late. Clearly this student is academically very weak.
 - There were two In-Course Assessments (ICA) of differing formats: 22 students failed the Basic Sciences ICA (two essays to be answered from a choice of three) whereas nine students failed the Oral Ecosystems ICA (eight short structured questions, five marks each). As I commented in my report last year, essays remaining a challenging form of assessment for students, particularly in an exam situation. There is a growing trend for essays to be dropped as a form of assessment in many BDS courses, but personally I find that they do allow students to demonstrate critically thinking and to they allow testing of in-depth and 'joined up' knowledge and understanding of subject areas. However, it was noted that the Basic Sciences ICA is to be dropped for next year and more emphasis will be placed on the Extended Essay and Poster Presentation Project – this will likely result in a slightly higher level of attainment since students were relatively stronger in the latter two assessments.
 - The Extended Essay had a lower failure rate (11 students) than for the essay-based Basic Sciences ICA (22 students). As one may expect, students performed better in the Extended Essay (since there was 3 months preparation time) than in writing essays in an exam situation. Plenty of guidance was given to students on how to write an essay and it was encouraging to note that no plagiarism was detected within the completed essays. I am pleased to hear that the Extended Essay is being retained as a form of assessment and given even greater emphasis.
 - The two written papers (Basic Sciences, Oral Ecosystems) covered a broad range of relevant topics, with a very good level of attainment. These papers comprised MSA questions, which were well structured – some questions had a more structured second part that particularly allowed demonstration of logical thought and clear understanding of scientific principles and biological processes. Standard setting was employed for the second year running, with a reasonable number of standard setters (up to seven) being used for each paper.

- The Oral Ecosystems and Foundation Practical was conducted online for the first time this year and once again covered a wide range of topics. It was noted that the subject of areas of nerves (taught in year 1) was examined in this exam in advance of the local anaesthetic symposium which followed soon afterwards, a very logical approach. Similarly, some aspects of tooth morphology that had been taught in year 1 were also assessed in this exam, since there was a tendency for students to forget what they had been taught in year 1 in this subject area – once again, a logical approach.

General comment: there was little or no annotation of exam scripts by markers, which made it difficult to see clearly where marks had been assigned. However, it was noted that the university-wide regulation appears to be that no annotation of exam scripts should be done by markers in case students request sight of said scripts.

Overall, student achievement is high and compares favourably with those of similar programmes elsewhere in the UK.

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

The programme aims and learning outcomes are highly appropriate and were successfully achieved by the wide variety of assessment methods used. Assessment procedures are robust and high-quality examination questions were used. I was once again pleased with the range, depth and appropriateness of the assessment methods used. The marks awarded were fair and no changes were necessary, and a consistent level of marking was evident.

4. Examination of Master's Dissertations (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](#).]

The high level of attainment was similar to last year. As mentioned in section 3, the Oral Ecosystems and Foundation Practical was conducted online for the first time this year.

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)

Assessment procedures are in line with those expected from 'good practice' and in keeping with institutional policies and procedures. I favour the continued use of essays (albeit now in a non-exam situation) to aid subject understanding.

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

N/A.

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?	X		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			X
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	X		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	X		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	X		
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?	X		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	X		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	X		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	X		
Coursework and practical assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	X		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	X		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	X		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			X
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	X		
Examining board meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	X		
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?	X		
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?			X
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			X
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			X

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