

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)



External Examiners are required to complete and submit Reports at least annually and within one month of the programme Examining Board.

Completed External Examiner Report Forms should be sent to:

ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses will be made upon receipt of this Report Form and upon receipt in hard copy of a completed External Examiner Claim Form for Reimbursement of Fees and Expenses and expenses receipts. This Report Form and the associated Claim Form may be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

External Examiner Reports are made available in full to students. For this reason, and in accordance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, individual staff and students should not be named within the Report.

Please note that External Examiner reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

Cardiff University prefers External Examiners to complete their Report Forms electronically and to submit them by email as indicated above. If, for any reason an External Examiner prefers to provide their report in hard copy it should be sent to *Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.*

PAYMENT OF FEES CANNOT BE AUTHORISED UNTIL RECEIPT OF THIS COMPLETED FORM AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM

Name of External Examiner:	Emyr Wyn Benbow
Institution:	University of Manchester
Programme of study and subject(s) examined:	Intermediate MB
Academic Year/Session to which this report applies:	2014-15

Freedom of Information Act

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

SECTION A

1.1 Programme Structure

Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).

I understand that a major curriculum reform is taking place, and that this is the last time the programme will follow this format. The new format appears to improve integration, and that is entirely appropriate.

1.2 Comparability of Standards

Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?

I was able to see multiple choice question papers before the examination, and the knowledge tested is comparable to similar programmes elsewhere. I was able to observe OSCE examinations, and the abilities demonstrated by students were comparable in complexity, and in the standards achieved, to their peers in my own and another institution where I have been External Examiner.

1.3 The Examination Process

Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.

The processes that I have seen are of a high standard.

SECTION A (Continued)

1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been implemented?

This is my fifth year in post; I was not made aware of any recommendations made by my predecessor. The procedures have shown no fundamental changes, though the tasks provided for OSCEs has become more structured, which is very good practice.

1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

- (i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;**
- (ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;**
- (iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;**
- (iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme.**

Consistency of marking will be enhanced by the standardised questions introduced into the OSCE Examiner's task.

1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.

SECTION B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are 'No'.

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	√		

Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	√		
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?	√		
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	√		
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?	√		

2.7 Comments

The spread of the questions was satisfactory; indeed, they appear in topic-related groups that make their relation to the curriculum very overt. The level of difficulty is also satisfactory, with very few exceptions, but some questions can be answered with rote-learned information, without any demonstration of understanding.

Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			√
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme's objectives?			√
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			√
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			√
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			√
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?			√

2.14 Comments**SECTION B (Continued)**

Coursework/Dissertations/Projects		Yes	No	N/A
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?			√
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			√

2.17 Comments

Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		Yes	No	N/A
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?	√		
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?	√		

2.20 Comments

I attended the Year 3 OSCEs at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend on April 30th. I was made very welcome by the local staff and organisers, and I observed a very well-organised assessment by experienced staff. They maintained a relaxed atmosphere, putting the anxious candidates at ease. I remain extremely impressed that you are able to recruit so many real patients. I assume that the ratio of nine male examiners to one female examiner is not typical.

I have seen Cardiff Medical School's OSCEs over a period of five years, and my recollection is that they have gradually developed over that period. These are very similar in most respects to those in my own institution (and by implication, those at the University of Keele). The major difference is that we have taken steps to assist the non-specialist examiner with the "knowledge" components of the stations, typically by downloading recent updates from reputable sites, such as NICE guidelines or sections of BNF, and editing them so that they fit the scripts: this is surprisingly easy and quick to do, and for instance allows pathologists to understand prescribing stations, surgeons to understand general medicine and everyone to understand general practice.

I have no urgent criticisms, but your OSCE management teams might want to consider the following:

- I spoke to students, and a few were concerned that the OSCEs that they have practiced have not simulated the experience of the real summative OSCE, and were surprised by the range of activities they were expected to perform and to integrate
- The briefing to students was long, and might have been more easily standardised and assimilated if it was supported by a PowerPoint presentation, or the like
- Some examiners allowed the students to leave their stations early if the task was completed; others did not. I would suggest that students should not leave the station until eight minutes is over: my own experience is that students will see early release as an unfair advantage because it allows extra time for preparation for the next station. It isn't, I'm sure, but perception is important
- There was some difference in examiner behaviour, in that a few confirmed or corrected student findings as they were presented; most did not
- Examiners should conceal marks from students: I saw a student who was visibly shocked by seeing a low mark. This might be detrimental to his subsequent station performances
- I was surprised that students were allowed to retain their mobile telephones, and wasn't able to reassure myself that there weren't opportunities for texts to be received and sent. We've confiscated phones for many years, without mishap, and without resentment
- There was a peripheral vascular examination station that needs clarification. The students were intended to examine the legs, and not the arms, but this was not made clear in the student instructions: the arms, after all, are peripheries

The overall standard was generally similar to that of Year 3 students in my own institution, though I saw more individually poor performances than I would expect. This may simply have been an artefact of low numbers, or less stringent preparation, but there were two stations that attracted particular comments from examiners, which I confirmed by personal observation:

- there was a station where the students were expected to calculate and administer a dose of subcutaneous medication. There were many miscalculations of very simple sums, many of them potentially dangerous if replicated in the clinical workplace. I recognise this as a widespread problem: our own prescribing stations also provide worrying outcomes
- several students confidently identified right heart failure as the main, or even only, cause of pulmonary oedema. The examiner, unprompted by me, suggested that incorrect information was circulating amongst the student body, perhaps by mobile phone

Examining Board Meeting		Yes	No	N/A
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	√		
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?	√		
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?			√
2.24	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(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	√		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?			√
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			√
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			√
2.28 Comments				
<p>I attended what was, in effect, a resit Examination Board, where very high stakes decisions were to be made. I found the processes to be impeccable. I was very impressed with the new usage of projected documents, and how this ensured that all present could be engaged with the critical issues under discussion. I had plenty of time in advance of the meeting to understand the critical issues, and in particular, I note that there had been very careful accumulation of information about two problem cases: this was presented to the Board, allowing detailed and well-informed discussion. I am confident that the decisions made in these difficult cases were appropriate, and would be made in comparable situations by other schools, including my own.</p>				
<p>Signed: Dr Emyr W Benbow Date: July 25th 2015</p> <p>Please return this report by email to: ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk</p> <p>Your fee and expenses claim form, and any reports which cannot be emailed, should be sent to: Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.</p>				