



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Declan McKeefry		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Bradford		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	BSc Optometry		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015/16	Date of Report:	28/06/16

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

1. Programme Structure

The BSc Optometry degree at Cardiff University is a three-year programme that provides the education and clinical training that enables students to follow a path that will ultimately see them become qualified optometrists. Successful completion of the BSc degree is typically followed by a 1-year Pre-registration period following which they will be eligible to be registered with the General Optical Council (GOC) allowing them to practise as Optometrists.

The course is accredited by the GOC which stipulates that certain core competencies and specific numbers of patient 'encounters' have to be attained by the students during their period of study. The clinical teaching is geared towards enabling students to reach these required competency and patient number levels. As a result, the structure and content of the Optometry degree programme is entirely appropriate and provides a solid foundation in the basic scientific, clinical and legal knowledge that will ultimately be utilised by the students throughout their professional careers.

The programme is delivered by a cohort of staff that comprises a mixture of GOC registered optometrists and academics from other related disciplines. The School of Optometry at Cardiff University is housed within a state-of-the-art building with first class teaching facilities.

2. Academic Standards

The Optometry course at Cardiff continues to maintain the highest academic standards.

On the whole the examination and assessment procedures are carried out with a high degree of rigour. The marking of exams and assessments as well as their moderation has been completed fairly, accurately and transparently.

Having read through a number of exam scripts, projects and other elements of coursework the quality and depth of the students' output is highly impressive and is a testament to the excellent teaching and training they receive.

As has been the case in previous years, I have been very impressed by the quality of the Research Projects submitted by the students. Projects that have received the highest marks are of exceptional quality and are commensurate with standards I have seen at MSc and even PhD level.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process appears to be thorough and rigorous throughout all stages. Most modules have exam, coursework/practical components that contribute towards a final mark. This range of assessment modes is entirely appropriate and essential for an Optometry degree programme.

As an external examiner I received all 3rd and 2nd Year exam papers and associated marking schemes well in advance and, apart for a few minor points, I found the quality of questions and the subject matter entirely appropriate. During our visit to Cardiff I reviewed a number of exam manuscripts from a range of 2nd and 3rd year modules and in all cases found the marking to be fair and carefully carried out in all instances. There was clear evidence of second marking/moderation in all modules, something that is to be commended. I also inspected a number of projects, course work elements and log books all of which were fairly considered.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

1) This is my final year as external at Cardiff – this year everything appeared to operate more smoothly and at a much better level of preparedness than last year. The extra time available for mark collation and administration meant that virtually all information was ready and available for us to scrutinise as externals.

2) This year only one 3rd year module had a high module mean mark; Low Vision & Contact Lenses (OP3202) we note that this was highlighted as an issue last year.

3) Student meetings – arrangements this year were much more satisfactory than in previous years. We met with a group of 6 final year students for a discussion of the Optometry degree programme. As externals we found this to be extremely useful and gave a much better insight into the organisation and running of the course from the perspective of the students. I would strongly recommend that these arrangements continue in future years.

4) Projects

Online/PDF submission of the Research Projects I think has been an excellent innovation.

As I have already mentioned above the quality of the projects remains high but from our discussions with the students this module still appears to absorb much of the

students' effort and attention over and beyond what is normally expected of a 20 credit module. Perhaps the over emphasis (on the part of the students) for this module could be moderated to some extent by encouraging the word limits to be adhered to more strictly, rather than given as a more advisory limit – which many of the students appear to exceed. Last year we met with two final year students and both commented that they would have liked to have more clarity on deadlines – as they put it “what was happening when” in terms of deadlines. The final year students who met with the Externals on 22nd June 2016 were unanimous in saying that deadlines were much clearer this year and they really appreciated getting feedback on their assessments within four weeks.

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

N/A.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Both of the external examiners were impressed by the feedback created relating to the exam performance for each module which provided a list of approximately 5 points on generic performance and issues relating to the exam. This will prove to be an invaluable source of information for subsequent cohorts on how to improve their exam performance.

I have commented previously on how much I like course work exercises that have to be completed as part of the Special Assessments Log Book.

The feedback from the clinics provided on-line by the supervisors is really superb and those involved in providing this should be congratulated as it obviously involved a great deal of work. This is highly appreciated by the students and was mentioned by them in our student meeting.

We also like the way in which clinical marks/grades from the patient encounters in the first semester are not including in the students' module marks. This obviously gives them time to develop their skills as practitioners without the pressures that often arise from continuous assessment.

7. Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations (External Examiners for postgraduate Master's Programmes only, see also 9.23-9.29 below)

N/A.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

It has been a privilege to have acted as external examiner for Optometry at Cardiff University over the last 4 years. I have looked forward to visiting the department on each occasion and have been treated very well by the entire academic and support staff in the School of Optometry. I would like to thank specifically the various members of staff who have been responsible for ensuring that all of the arrangements have been in place during my visits to the School over the last 4 years

The professionalism, dedication and friendliness of the staff is reflected in the quality and standards of the course that they provide. Each year I have been impressed by the levels of effort shown by the staff and the quality of the work produced by the students. The School of Optometry in Cardiff continues to be a flagship for Optometry in the UK and this looks set to be the case for the future.

There is one area that I think needs to be addressed in future and relates to the procedures surrounding the scrutiny of 2nd and 3rd year exam papers. Following the submission of comments that we as externals make on the examination papers, there needs to be some acknowledgement and feedback provided as to whether suggested changes/corrections to the papers have been implemented and if not, why not (as I realise there may be sound reasons for disagreements).

I have found it somewhat frustrating to have spent time going through the examination papers each year only to find comments/corrections not acted on. Probably the most substantive issue this year related to Section B of the OP2201 Clinical Studies and Dispensing paper. Comments I made on the style and nature of questions on this paper were ignored and no explanation was provided until I specifically asked about it (and even then I did not find the justification convincing!). This feedback to externals on the exam papers I believe is standard practice at other institutions and I think a similar process of responding to externals' comments needs to be instigated at Cardiff.

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 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?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		N	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?		N	
Marking 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?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	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				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?	Y		
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?			N/A
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
9.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A

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:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE

SAMPLING OF TAUGHT MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

External Examiners shall be expected to see prescribed numbers and ranges of Dissertations, but not to mark them, on the following basis:

At least 10% of Dissertations for a postgraduate taught Master's Programme, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure) must be seen by the External Examiner(s). Where the total number is less than 10, all Dissertations must be seen by the External Examiner(s) #.

Dissertations seen by External Examiners should include examples from across the whole range of achievement (i.e. Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail).

External Examiners will retain the right to see other Dissertations at random.

- # Where more than one External Examiner is appointed on a Programme, at least 10% of Dissertations, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure), should be seen collectively by the External Examiners.