



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Stephen Rippon		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Exeter		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Archaeology UG		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	23 rd June 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

I have seen plenty of evidence for an excellent programme structure that includes a **balance of methodological and thematic modules**, with a **wide range of assessment methods**. There is a strong commitment to **fieldwork and other practical skills**. An excellent dissertation preparation module feeds through to some high quality dissertations.

2. Academic Standards

Overall, I am happy that the academic standards applied in Archaeology at Cardiff are appropriate. Most modules have a good spread of marks, although in some there is a **marked bunching of grades in the 60s** and while in all cases I agreed with the relative order of the assignment marks right across the profile, in several modules the weaker assignments have been marked a little too generously (eg assignments described as ‘a reasonable account’ and/or that have used just a handful of published, but largely out-of-date, sources are getting a 2:1s). I would also note cases where students have done considerably better in the coursework than the examination, and looking at the quality of the work I feel the coursework has been marked a little too generously and that the exam has revealed the true weaknesses in a student’s breadth and depth of understanding.

I strongly support the **wide range of assessment methods** including the use of traditional essays and unseen examinations, as well as more innovative forms of assignment: a strong degree programme needs to have a balance of both.

In a number of cases (mostly practical modules) the **quality of the presentation of assignments** relative to their academic standard was poor (this was most noticeable in the Computer Projects module). Students and markers should be reminded that even in practical modules a high standard of presentation is required in the written assignments as this is a core academic and transferable skill.

3. The Assessment Process

I am happy with the rigor of the assessment processes, and thank the Department for ensuring that the **administrative processes** ran smoothly.

All the **bundles of assignments** came with the module guide and the second marker/moderators coversheet which was extremely helpful.

I found the **marking process** extremely thorough.

Feedback to students was generally excellent although the amount varied considerably between modules.

Where **particular issues** have arisen staff have taken care to provide the necessary background on what it is they are seeking the External Examiner's opinion on. Properly briefing the External in this way is important good practice.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

There are some excellent **Dissertations** and in the vast majority of cases this is where students have engaged with primary data (this was particularly clear in the Science Dissertations). The weaker 'Dissertations' are, however, simply extended essays, and this is a particular problem with the more 'humanities' (as opposed to scientific) topics. An excellent **dissertation preparation module** and the **sheets used to record supervision meetings** shows that the students are receiving good guidance, and so I would suggest that greater attention should be given to the topics that students are allowed to study: a topic should only be approved if it forces a students to engage with primary data rather than allowing them to slip into simply summarising literature.

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

n/a

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There strong commitment to **practical work**, and the excellent standard of some **Dissertations** (where they engage with primary data) is noteworthy.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I have been extremely impressed during my three years as External Examiner in Archaeology Cardiff with the hard work that staff put into teaching and assessment.

There is an excellent programme structure and balance between thematic and practical modules. There is also a balance between traditional (essay and exam) and more innovative assessment.

I have had two main concerns: firstly, I feel that in some modules there is too much bunching of the marks in the 60s, and secondly, I feel that some of the dissertations are simply extended essays.

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?		n	
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?			
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?			n/a
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?			n/a
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			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:

Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE