

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:	Dr Alexandra Allan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Exeter		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	MSc Education, Postgraduate Taught <i>MSc in Education, Policy and Society and MSc Childhood and Youth</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015/16	Date of Report:	6 th July 2016

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

I continue to be impressed by the structure of the programme. The programme has an extensive and exciting range of modules which are available to students. This is a real strength of the programme and allows students to develop strong grounding in theory, policy and practice and knowledge of a wide range of substantive debates. From the examples of work I was able to look at I could see that the modules allowed students to apply knowledge from the more research focused modules to their own particular substantive interests/those of the modules. This is also a real strength and should set the students in good stead for future research practice, should they progress to PGR study.

2. Academic Standards

It is clear that standards are very high on the programme and that these tutors encourage and support their students to achieve. Where fails were awarded these were justified, and students were given fair chance to resubmit their work. On most of the modules I examined it was clear to see that the tutors engaged in extensive dialogue with students (i.e. in feedback on the scripts) to support them further, whatever the grade they had been awarded. The marks I have seen awarded here are equivalent to those on programmes elsewhere and are evident of the standards tutors uphold on the programme.

3. The Assessment Process

I am convinced that tutors on this programme undertake assessment in a way which is systematic, robust and fair. It is particularly helpful to be able to see the comments shared between the two markers, to see how final marks were agreed and awarded. I was also impressed by the care taken to confirm and consider fail marks (particularly given the ramifications that this might have for a student). Feedback appeared to be consistent across most of the modules which I examined (with only one exception to this, where tutors on a module did not provide feedback on the script) and it was often very well written (i.e. supportive, encouraging and extensive).

4. Year-on-Year Comments

I would echo many of the positive comments I made last year. In particular, it is still apparent (from the sample assignments read) that the students:

- Engage in extensive reading, which has breadth and depth (my only comment here is that, as last year, I remain convinced that students should not be citing basic research text books quite so extensively at this level of study in the research modules)
- Have a good practical understanding of how to utilise certain research methods
- Can develop interesting, exciting and appropriate research designs
- Are able to respond creatively in the assignments which they are given – making them their own and following their own particular needs and interests

However, it was also evident this year that:

- The students may require some further language support. This is not something that I would expect the course tutors to be responsible for, this is usually something provided by the wider university. Whilst I am assured that this might be a particular requirement for the students this year, I am sure that students might benefit from this in the future too. From the assignments it was clear that some students really struggled with their assignments due to language issues. These issues didn't seem to have been resolved by the end of the year. Could these students be identified earlier on in their studies and sent for extra support?
- There could be a need for more varied assessment. The dominant form of assessment was the 4000 word essay. These essays may well vary in their form on each course, so I am merely suggesting that the team look across the modules to see if this is the case, and to see if a wider range of assignment types could be used in the future.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

- An excellent range of module choices
- Students were provided with a strong theoretical grounding in the Debates in Educational Research module and Critical Perspectives in Social Science
- A novel and helpful approach to teaching in the Debates in Educational Research module
- An interesting, appropriate and helpful assignment was utilised in the Childhood, Youth and Policy module
- Some strong and interesting research proposals developed as a result of the research methods modules
- Extensive and encouraging feedback for students on the Contemporary Issues in Childhood and Youth module

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

To follow, for the November board

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

N/A

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/A
Draft Examination Question Papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?			N/A
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
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				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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		
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?			To follow in November
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.