



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Sean Cavan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Sheffield Hallam University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MEP		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-13	Date of Report:	October 18 <sup>th</sup> 2013

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

The core and dispersed team are doing an excellent job in supporting students across the country and raising the profile of the MEP, the University and the teaching profession both within and beyond Wales.

The student representative system is well-established and provides a robust process for engaging the student voice in the running of, and the improvements to, the programme. Considerable effort is expended in recruiting and maintaining a motivated group of mentors who play a vital role in the MEP. This is complimented by a dedicated team of academic and administrators who are delivering a complex, demanding and high quality programme.

Students have raised some concerns over clarity regarding the functional support provided by mentors for the induction elements of their mentor role and the MEP support elements of their role. Whilst there is a clear structural overlap between these two elements, which is a fundamental part of the first stage of the students MEP experience, there may be opportunities to more clearly emphasise the interdependence of these elements, perhaps though more explicit linkages being made between the issues considered through the MEP and the achievement of the various elements of the teacher standards through the induction support processes and activities.

The role of the mentor could be enhanced if they were able to be made more directly aware of the outcomes of students' assessments, at least in terms of pass/fail and grade but perhaps more usefully in terms of comments as well. There are likely to be data protection issues here but a recommendation is that the programme team, explore with University colleagues how feasible this could be.

The plans for managing the change in relationship between Mentors and students post their induction period are being thoroughly thought through by the programme team. They are also giving appropriate consideration to mentor capacity for the MEPs forthcoming intake of new students and ongoing support for current students.

There is a concern, which was expressed by students and mentors, and is echoed by the External Examiners, regarding the timing and scheduling of the modules. Although there is a relatively low withdrawal rate overall compared with other large scale programmes of this type, approximately 50% of those who have withdrawn have cited work pressures as the primary reason.

The NQT year is extremely demanding and student teachers, by the nature of their professionalism, will put the needs of their own school students first. It is recommended that senior programme team members discuss the degree of flexibility that there may be with the Welsh Government concerning the scheduling of modules at this critical first stage, in order to enhance the learning experience for MEP participants and maximise their retention., both on the MEP programme and as member of the teaching profession.

The meeting with students and mentors was particularly valuable in helping Externals explore a range of programme issues in much greater depth than can be achieved through documentation alone. We gained a real appreciation with respect to how mentors and students engaged with critical aspects such as course organisation, module delivery and support, the interactions between students, tutors and mentors, managing induction, MEP and school workloads, linkages between assignments and professional practice and professional development.

It is clear from all these interactions with the programme team, the assignments, the mentors and, most importantly the students, that the MEP programme at this early stage is achieving its objectives and laying a very strong foundation for both the progression of current students and the engagement of future students. The Externals, and the students and mentors, all felt that it would be very useful for us to meet with the same group of students and mentors next year as well as students drawn from the new intake

I would strongly recommend that the University provide appropriate incremental increases in support, both in terms of staffing and into terms of University processes, for example in the scheduling of VLE and other system downtime, to enhance the already excellent work and achievements of the of the programme team and provide resilience and robustness in the face of expanding number of students, mentors and participating schools and Local Authorities

## **2. Academic Standards**

The standards set for the assessment process are appropriate for Masters Work and are adhered to in a consistent manner. The standards are also comparable to those for similar programs delivered through other Universities.

It is noticeable that referencing can be a problem for a number of students and it is recommended that the team might wish to consider providing more overt guidance on this to students and, if it is felt to be beneficial, to mentors. .

The assignment information provided,, including example scripts, was very helpful in providing a clear picture of the work being done by the students and ensuring that the Externals comments were founded in a sound understanding of the programmes' assessment strategy

## **3. The Assessment Process**

The assessments used in each module considered are well-structured and have a strong and obvious relationship to the module learning outcomes. They provide meaningful opportunities for the students to integrate academic thinking with their own professional practice and their own development as teacher. The assessment guidance is clear and unambiguous, which is particularly important given the structural relationship between tutors, students and mentors. The assessment processes provide plenty of opportunity for each student to personalise their learning experience within the boundaries of a common module assessment process. The commonality provides a structure in which meaningful peer-to-peer learning can take place, which is overtly encouraged by the programme staff.

The individual feedback from tutors is relevant, sensitive, supportive, developmental and clearly informed by a deep understanding of the working and professional challenges faced by the students. Whilst the quality of feedback is consistent, there are some small variations in the amount of written feedback for assignments which the team may wish to address . The External Examiners are aware of the robust processes for the moderation of assessments, both in terms of training and familiarisation for the tutor team and moderation processes post marking. Addressing the minor differences in feedback volume may be achieved through the former.

The generic feedback is to be highly commended as some of the best practice I have encountered in this kind of programme. It is though, thoughtful and very supportive for all students. It provides individuals with a good view of where their own performance stands against the range of norms for M-ness and for the performance of their peers on the programme. This is an excellent and non-threatening approach to encouraging meaningful self-reflection on assignment performance .

Feedback is both formative with respect to future modules and summative with respect to each module being assessed

## **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

N/A

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

This was very thorough, relevant and helpful

**6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

See section 1 and 3 for comments and recommendations

**7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

N/A

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	x		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			x
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			x
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			x
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			x
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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?			x
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			x
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			x
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			x
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			x
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	x		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	x		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	x		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	x		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	x		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	x		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	x		
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?	x		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			x
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			x
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			x

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto: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