



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Susan Condor		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Loughborough University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BA Education (BPS route) BSc Social Science (BPS route)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-13	Date of Report:	27 July 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 two programmes that I considered were both designed to qualify students for Graduate membership of the British Psychological Society (BPS). The BPS requires accredited programmes to include coverage of core aspects of a prescribed curriculum. The BA Education (BPS route) and BSc Social sciences (BPS route) have been designed to deliver a BPS accredited course in an interdisciplinary social science context. I was very impressed with the design of these two programmes. In my experience, they are unique in the UK, in so far as they present undergraduates with a genuinely coherent programme which integrates the required psychological component with up-to-date coverage of educational and social science theory and research. This is true both of the schemes as a whole, and also of the individual modules that I examined (*Psychology and Social Behaviour; Issues in Social and Cultural Psychology; Identity and Individual Differences*).

2. Academic Standards

The modules that I considered were all very challenging for an undergraduate programme. Nevertheless, student performance on examinations, coursework and dissertations was generally strong. Even weaker work demonstrated a reasonable grasp of the subject matter, and the acquisition of basic academic skills. Work attracting the highest marks was amongst the best that I have seen.

3. The Assessment Process

I had no concerns about the assessment process in general. The grading of work was generally fair and consistent, and I was reassured that appropriate procedures were being adopted for assessing work on modules that were team taught.

There were three issues that I thought that the modules leaders might wish to consider:

- At the moment, the dissertations are not marked by the students' supervisors. This obviously facilitates anonymous marking. Nevertheless, I was a little concerned that in the absence of any information from the supervisor, there might be a danger that markers would not be able to distinguish cases in which students had been reliant on "spoon feeding" from their supervisors, from cases in which the student had displayed far more originality and creativity and required less direct assistance, but as a result may have produced a slightly less polished finished product.
- Some markers seemed a little reluctant to use the top grades in the marking scale. Whilst I certainly would not advocate wholesale grade inflation, I did feel that in some cases higher marks could have been awarded to really outstanding pieces of work. For modules in which top grades are very rarely given, module leaders might consider checking that the stated module aims and objectives are not over-ambitious for the level at which the module is being taught.
- The university regulations currently suggest a "one size fits all" approach to moderating marks. However, I noted some slight variety in moderating practices between modules. I would suggest that academic staff adopt the university regulations as the minimum, but allow for the fact that in some situations additional measures may be needed to ensure the reliability of marking. For example, in cases where the assessed work largely involves the collection or recall of basic factual information (e.g. short answer questions) or when a module is well established, then the university's "light touch" approach may be appropriate. However, in other situations (e.g. with a new module, new forms of assessed work, or new members of staff or markers) a rather more detailed approach to moderating (or even in some cases second marking) may be called for.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

N/A

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

None

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

I am not aware of any other undergraduate programme in the UK in which psychology modules have so successfully combined orthodox scientific perspectives, critical approaches to psychology and current perspectives drawn from criminology, sociology or educational research.

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)
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/A
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	<p>Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?</p> <p>It is always difficult to evaluate a course and its assessment with a sample of scripts alone. It would have been useful to have summary statistics (at least means and standard deviations) for all modules and examinations, where appropriate broken down by question. In future years, comparison data would also be useful.</p> <p>These data are not difficult to construct – this year I calculated the overall means and standard deviations for the three modules I considered myself.</p> <p>In addition, summary statistics might in future be usefully included in generic feedback to the students. These can be presented quite simply (e.g. in the form of histograms) and can be used by students to assess their own comparative performance, and also can reassure them that standards of marking are generally consistent across modules.</p>	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?			N/A
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				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.11	<p>Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?</p> <p>The assessed work was always appropriate, but I felt that the range of forms of assessment was a little limited (generally involving essay-style answers to set questions).</p>	Y		
8.12	<p>Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?</p> <p>In general, the samples were satisfactory. However, the sample of dissertations was rather small (N=4) and did not well reflect the diversity of methods employed. In future, a rather larger, and more diverse, sample would be useful.</p>	Y		
8.13	<p>Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?</p>	Y		
8.14	<p>Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?</p> <p>I thought that rather more attention might be paid to formative feedback (i.e. explaining to students precisely how they might develop their work in future). In addition, it might help the students if a little more attention were to be given to the fit between the written feedback provided and (a) the description of the marking categories, and (b) the stated module aims and objectives.</p> <p>I did not see examples of the generic feedback give to the class, and I would appreciate doing so in future.</p>			
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	<p>Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?</p>			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	<p>Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?</p>	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	<p>Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?</p>	Y		
8.18	<p>Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?</p>	Y		
8.19	<p>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?</p>	Y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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