



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

The completion of this Report is supported by *Annual Report Form – Guidance to External Examiners*. The Guidance and this Form are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>. Fee information and claim forms are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/fees/index.html>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	MARTIN POWELL		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	UNIVERSITY of BIRMINGHAM		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	SOCIAL SCIENCES (SOCIAL POLICY)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-3	Date of Report:	22/7/13

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 found the programme to be well structured, with considered core/ compulsory modules and a wide range of optional subjects. The individual modules clearly reflected recent scholarship in the area, and – correctly- where relevant staff included their own recent research outputs on the Reading List. There was a clear coherence to the programme and ‘routes’ were well considered.

2. Academic Standards

It is difficult to get a clear sense of academic standards from the samples of work that I saw, and difficult to compare between modules as descriptive statistics (eg means/ medians/ standard deviations and coefficients of variation) were not given. This means it is difficult to reconcile internal comparisons (with other courses). However, my impression from external comparisons is that perhaps marking was a shade generous in places. Where two marks were given, I tended to agree more with the ‘lower marker’. In my view, there was particularly generous marking for short course work answers. For example, students received over-generous marks for (say) an essay of 2000 words with a 4000 word essay that inevitably lacked detail. Moreover, the University regulations mean that (in my view) marginal marks of (say) 57.5 are uplifted to a higher category. In my view, this leads to some grade inflation at the margins. However, marks also need to be considered in the light of internal comparisons, which were not possible.

3. The Assessment Process

I found the assessment process was well carried out by internal markers (albeit within a generous. I was pleased to see a variety of assessment methods, including a good balance between coursework and examinations. Internal markers clearly put a great deal of effort into the process, and the practice of having two markers for pieces of work is to be commended. However, it should be made clearer whether this is 'second marking' or 'moderation'. In my view, there should ideally be a more standard template of choice for coursework and examinations (eg answer x questions from a choice of y). Given my understanding that any annotated coursework is not returned to students, the volume of feedback was a little light in some cases.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my first year, so there are no previous comments from me. I have found no major comment from the Previous External Examiner unaddressed.

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

There was no formal 'Induction' per se, although I received sufficiently detailed information and any queries were quickly answered by staff. Moreover, I attended the 'Dissertation day' and spoke informally to staff then.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The Dissertation Log is an excellent idea. When well carried out by a good student, it provides very interesting material in itself.

This may not be the best place to put this, but I do have some concerns over the current staffing levels for the social policy modules. The small team covers many courses, and appears to be very hard-pressed. While they have done an excellent job, I am not sure that such workload is sustainable for a leading research-intensive University.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?			NA
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?		N (2 above)	
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?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?		N (3 above)	
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			NA
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Examining Board Meeting				
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?	Y		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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