



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Sukanya Sengupta		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Royal Holloway College, University of London		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MBA (Management, Employment and Organisation)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-2015	Date of Report:	July 16, 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

The programme structures are well thought through and strike a delicate balance between academic rigour and practical application of theoretical constructs and key business concepts and issues. Furthermore the programmes seek to offer students with relevant transferable skills that would serve them well in industry. The programmes offer sufficient opportunities for interaction by delivering them through taught lectures and more interactive seminars/syndicate groups. The idea of using role play in encouraging greater learning and participation is an excellent idea. In my view this would facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the key theoretical concepts and relevant academic issues that are being discussed in the lectures.

A strong emphasis is on critical thinking and practical application. These skills are invaluable in developing analytical abilities required at the masters level and will lay the foundation for students wishing to pursue research degrees and also prove to be invaluable in an industry setting. Some of the modules (example BST 512) encourage students to make presentations. This is a very useful aid in encouraging students to learn, understand and clarify key concepts and in developing their communication and presentation skills.

Points of clarification:

BST 512, BST 516 and BST 521 : deliver the programme through a series of 10 hour lectures and 6 hours of small group teaching and seminars. What is the purpose of the small group teaching? Are these mini lectures or does this refer to the seminars? How many hours of seminars do the students have? It is unclear as to how the lectures and seminars are linked. Some universities have the same numbers of seminars and lectures so that there is a clear link between the concepts taught in each lecture and the seminars that are delivered. How are the lectures and seminars linked here? Clarity on the number of contact hours would be useful. Furthermore, in case of BST521, there is a class test that accounts for 30% of the overall marks. How is this conducted and why is the duration classified as being 'n/a'? What is the purpose of having a class test in addition to an exam? Does it enable students to be better prepared for the final examination?

BST 541: It would be useful to clarify whether the delivery in terms of 8X3 hours weekly lectures and syndicates refers to 3 hours of lecture and additional time for syndicates or does this includes 8X2 hour lectures and 8Xone hour syndicate sessions per week. I am assuming that there are 8 syndicate sessions in addition to the 8 lectures. The sub heading 'On completion the module the student should be able to' appears twice and more importantly, the description outline of the module is provided under this sub heading. This should be rectified.

BST 609, BST 610 and BST 607: These modules are delivered over a three day period comprising of a number of integrated sessions including seminars and small group work. How many contact hours do the students have? Greater clarity on the delivery in terms of hours and the distribution of different sessions would be useful. Are we talking about three full days?

2. Academic Standards

The expected academic standards were upheld both in terms of the imaginative and rigorous programme structures (see comments above), exam scripts as well as the academic assessment. The standards of marking were fair and consistent throughout the programmes. Good detailed feedback was offered. (Please see detailed comments below).

3. The Assessment Process (including dissertations, if appropriate)

OVERALL COMMENTS FOR ALL THE PROGRAMMES

- Overall the assessment was fair and consistent within each module.
- The comments on the exam scripts and the assignments/coursework were very detailed and insightful. The marks awarded were an accurate reflection of the comments that were made. The attention to detailed offered on some modules is truly remarkable and can be used as a benchmark for other institutions.
- The expected answers or suggested responses as well as the marking criteria and the rationale for the allocation of marks for different categories were clear and lent greater credibility to the marking system.

- Some modules offered a detailed analysis of the exams results and the breakdown/distribution of the marks. This was very helpful and the attention to detail was impressive.
- Whilst there was consistency in terms of marking within each module, greater consistency across different modules in terms of the information offered to the external examiner would be useful. For example, the breakdown or distribution of marks, comparison with performance in the previous year, analysis of the student performance and indicative answers across all modules would be useful. Finally, it was not clear as to how representative the samples were for the entire population.
- Each module seems to have a template or assessment guidelines for different categories of marks. It is excellent to see that the module leaders have gone through great lengths to ensure that the assessment guidelines are suited to the specific modules. Some have even gone to the extent of ensuring that the guidelines are specific to each question. However, is there a universal template or assessment guideline offered that would cut across different modules so that a '50' in one module is at par with a '50' in another module? In some cases I felt that the standards for the lower end marks especially '50's and '40's varied across modules.

MBA dissertations:

- Largely agree with the marks on the dissertations which seemed to be consistent and in accordance with Cardiff University marking criteria. However, I found them to be relatively weak in terms of the research methodology. On the whole the marks were fair and the first examiners have made some insightful comments. It would have been useful to have a fail in the sample alongside the distinctions and firsts so as to provide an overview of dissertations across the key categories.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my first year as an examiner so I have comments for one year.

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

None at all. I provided a detailed report in a word document format for the exam board that was held in July. I was not made aware of the requirement to fill in the examiners form in addition to the report that I had submitted. There appears to be a disconnect between those who compile the forms and those who send us the various documents for assessment.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The administrative staff are professional, very well meaning and helpful and respond promptly to enquiries. It has been a pleasure interacting with them. They are an asset to Cardiff university. The only issue is regarding turnaround time expected of the external examiner. I do understand that at times there are emergencies and I have been happy to help out. However, it is not acceptable to ask for feedback in less than

a week's time on more than one occasion. It would be much appreciated if the university guidelines are followed regarding turnaround time requested from the external examiners.

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?	Yes		
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?	Yes		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Yes		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Yes		
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?	Yes		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Yes		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Yes		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Yes		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Yes		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Yes		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Yes		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Yes		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Yes		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		n/q		
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work? (the experience varied at times I was given sufficient time at other times I was asked to give feedback at short notice)		Not always	

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		No	
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			n/a
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?		No	
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?		No	
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:

Quality and Standards, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE