



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Jim Deuchars		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Leeds		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Biomedical Sciences <i>BSc in Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience, Physiology); BSc in Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience, Physiology) (Intercalated)</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-2015	Date of Report:	05/08/2015

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 is well structured, allowing students on different programmes to study similar core modules in year 1. This enables them to change degree programme within the School at the end of first year if they so choose. This also ensures that all students have sound background knowledge before moving into year 2.

In year 2 the choices of core and optional modules allows the students to retain some flexibility according to their interests. Similarly, in year 3 most degree programmes also have some optional modules, which encourages students to follow topics in which they are interested.

2. Academic Standards

This is my 3rd year as external examiner in these degree programmes and I have found academic standards to be high. The work produced by the students is at least equivalent to that I have observed in duties as external examiner in other Universities. The School are to be congratulated on being able to provide a broad selection of topics for Biomedical Science degree programme students to study.

Students have sufficient opportunity to express their knowledge and understanding in a broad range of assessments. The process of scrutineering applied to exam papers appears to provide the basis for quality assurance of assessment. Overall module marks are subject to particular scrutiny by Chairs of Exam and Scheme Boards when average marks fall outside of 55-65 range. This helps set appropriate academic standards.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process is well structured and organised. However, there is a potential disparity across modules in the final year to the number of marks awarded for the same effort: for example, in one module a 10 minute talk received 10% of the final 10 credit module mark, whereas in another 10 credit module the same duration presentation was worth 30%. I therefore encourage the school to consider if the in-course work is receiving the appropriate credit across all modules.

Human Physiology students felt that 4 exams in 4 days could have disadvantaged them in comparison to others. Since the exam period is 3 weeks it would be helpful if these could be timetabled with more time between the exams.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

I am pleased to see that the School does consider our comments and makes appropriate changes. For example, in one module last year I indicated to the School that scrutineering of exam papers was inadequately applied and this was corrected this year. I found a similar example of this in another module this year and hope that similar changes will occur. In another module last year very low marks suggested that students had been disadvantaged by undertaking this module and a correction was applied, but this was not necessary this year (perhaps because there was a larger cohort of students studying this module this year). In previous years we have raised concerns on the requirement for some coursework that did not bear marks to be completed for passing the project module and therefore a degree, but this has been resolved. There were also some issues last year with the introduction of SIMS, but information was more accessible this year.

In addition, last year I noted concern over the limited choice of final year modules for Neuroscience students. The School have indicated that there will be changes made to the final year options for these students to provide more choice for next year, which I look forward to seeing.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The marking codes applied on exam scripts help see how marks have been arrived at.

I did not meet any students this year as this visit is shared between examiners, but on reading module feedback it is clear that students enjoy their Biomedical degree programmes at Cardiff.

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?	x		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			x
Draft Examination Question Papers				
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		
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?	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		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
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		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	x		
Examining Board Meeting				

		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		
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?			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

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