



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Gwydion Wynne		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Wales: Trinity St Davids		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Masters in Educational Practice		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013/2014	Date of Report:	20 January 2014

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online.**

General Comments

Many thanks for the invitation to be a part of the external examining team for the Masters in Educational Practice. I would like to extend my thanks for the welcome I received. Thank you to Radyr Comprehensive School for using its site to hold discussions with mentors and a number of teachers who have chosen to study the Masters.

Arrangements were thorough and I was very thankful for the support of the administrative office when reading through the various documents and receiving an explanation on a few aspects of the work as needed. Thanks for their patience.

All communications and arrangements were thorough and effective throughout the examination process. It's a pleasure to share in your success and I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to congratulate all the team, from universities within the partnership, lecturers and mentors in the classroom for their efforts in ensuring that high standards are maintained and that teachers develop as effective practitioners in their educational settings throughout Wales. I can attest that comments based on the programme arise from my observations of the assignments and the discussions held with a number of key Masters stakeholders such as university staff, mentors and the candidates themselves.

1. Programme Structure

Welsh- and English-medium assessments were received in three modules within the programme namely (a) Module 1 – An Introduction to Teachers’ Professional Research, (b) Module 2 – Learning and Development by Children and Young People (0-19) and (c) Module 3 – Behaviour Management.

I believe that the programme provides teachers with excellent opportunities to gather information from different sources to adapt it systematically within an educational context. Opportunities are provided in the three modules to analyse current research and link it in naturally with pedagogic aspects in order to present complex ideas and concepts which reflect pedagogy in the classroom. I commend the opportunities provided in the modules to develop analysis in many forms which set candidates a challenge at level 7. I believe that the programme is contemporary and reflects the statutory regulations of QTS including the various policies of the Welsh Government and other independent bodies within the scope of education in Wales.

To conclude I can attest from the evidence provided to me that the programme has an appropriate balance showing a combination of the importance of practical and professional experience as well as evidence of current research in order to develop and use meaningful concepts and theories in the classroom at Masters level.

2. Academic Standards

Within the scope of the Masters degree I believe that the three modules provide appropriate challenges based on the expected academic standards at Masters Level (level 7).

As regards candidates’ attainment, I can attest that they are similar to those I have experience of within the University of Wales’ higher qualifications framework. From the evidence I have seen I am convinced that standards correspond to those in other institutions which offer a similar degree in the field within Wales.

3. The Assessment Process

The generic criteria recorded in the Cohort One Assessment Handbook is concise and clearly communicate your expectations of the required standards which need to be presented at Masters Level (level 7) giving candidates clear guidance regarding the marking categories and ranges for the programme.

I read around 80 scripts in both languages across the three modules. I can attest that the written feedback candidates were given was consistent as regards criteria. Most of the mentors who marked work provided constructive feedback including praise as well as offering support and practical means of strengthening aspects of their complete work in future.

By virtue of my appointment, one of the duties involved comparing marks awarded for the Welsh scripts with those for the English scripts. I can confirm that the marks awarded for the three modules as regards equivalence of marks and the comments which candidates received were equivalent on the whole, i.e. the mark awarded for an English script e.g. 62% was equivalent to 62% in a Welsh script. There was obvious consistency in the way the Welsh-medium and English-medium

assessments were marked. I believe that the assessment methods introduced in the three modules are appropriate for assessing work at Masters Level (level 7).

General issues which were noted in mentors' recommendations as regards candidate feedback included inconsistent referencing, the need for further analysis, to be less descriptive, to select suitable background articles, to extend background reading, further cross-referencing, that candidates should read their work before submitting it to the university and to attempt to present a well-balanced argument from both sides. A small percentage of candidates had misunderstood the question. I would like you to consider the reasons for this.

Although I have noted that your assessment guidelines are clear, and that you referred to them in many places, it was apparent that the Havard referencing method caused weaker candidates problems as well as some candidates who were awarded marks above 70%. Arising from the evidence, I would recommend that mentors should highlight and possibly hold a short session based on Havard referencing methods. I believe that it's a duty to ensure that candidates give such processes their full attention before submitting their final work to the university.

To conclude I would like to state clearly that definite development and progression is seen in candidates' academic skills as they grow in confidence and develop their understanding of the expectations from modules one to three at Masters level (level 7). The three modules provided a means of encouraging candidates to examine, apply and analyse information when evaluating and presenting balanced arguments and arriving at an opinion based on the knowledge of important developments in their fields. I can attest that assessment processes were appropriate and that they reflect the university's quality assurance systems and procedures. The evidence I saw fulfilled requirements as regards thoroughness and equality for each candidate.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Not applicable.

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

I would like to communicate my thanks to the whole team in the university for their thoroughness. A number of academic and administrative documents were received by the different departments which conveyed the scope of the appointment and the procedures and processes which needed to be followed. I wonder whether it would be possible to receive a login name and password name from the website supporting the degree in order to glean an understanding of the pastoral and communication processes which are provided to candidates across the programme?

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Congratulations on your achievements this year. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to share some further comments on good practice and suggestions for aspects of the programme for the future.

Good practice

1. When discussing with mentors and teachers it was obvious from the cross-section seen that a good working and professional relationship had been established between them based on professional educational respect and knowledge.

2. From the whole range of supporting documentation seen, I can confirm that your means of communication with candidates are completely clear and provide them with clear guidance as regards your expectations for different aspects of coursework.
3. Candidates clearly noted that there were good communication methods and support systems in place for them. However, one candidate noted that she felt rather isolated at times as she was the only individual studying the Masters Degree in her school. She would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with other candidates at times especially before submitting pieces of degree work to the university.
4. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to meet the candidates I saw this year again as well as a cross-section of the new cohort next year. Having a professional conversation with them was beneficial and constructive to contextualise the programme as regards the expectations, communication and support processes of all programme stakeholders. I believe that the timetable prepared for us this year as external examiners provided a candid overview of the Masters Degree within the first year of the programme. Thank you for your support.

Recommendations for consideration

- Ensure consistency as regards mentors' comments when providing candidates with written support in the assessment sheet.
- Incorporate the terminology presented in the Generic Marking Criteria when providing constructive feedback to ensure that tutor comments are consistent and equal across the programme.
- Try to draw candidates' attention further to the importance of using correct referencing methods when recording evidence from further background reading in the bibliography.
- When evaluating the academic year it might be worth considering practical processes and communication methods in the context of point 3 above by developing communication systems for practitioners by means of a social forum gateway supervised by the university.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

Not applicable.

I would like to thank you finally for your cooperation during the examination process. I am convinced that the programme sets practitioners exciting challenges and provides opportunities to implement aspects of their professional academic analysis in their day-to-day teaching.

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	
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?			n/a
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			n/a
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?			n/a
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			n/a
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?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			n/a
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

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

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Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE