



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Ewen S. MacMillan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Non-academic institution self-employment		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	PGT (MSc) Optometry & Vision Sciences		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012/2013	Date of Report:	25/07/13

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

The structure of the modules meet the stated aims and learning outcomes published. The modules incorporate distance learning online lectures as part of the learning experience. These lectures are of high quality and contain pertinent course content. Action has been taken where necessary to update the original recordings that have become outdated.

Feedback from students may indicate that the course content is appreciated when released in full at the start of the module rather than staggered over time. Full release of the course content allows the students to manage their own study in their own time. This is being considered currently.

The Clinical Optometry MSc modules cover a wide range of topics and credit sizes that have been carefully constructed to reflect the recent changes to primary health care. Modules such as Leadership Skills, Clinical Audit and most recently Ophthalmic Public Health are forward thinking and give optometrists and other healthcare workers an opportunity to venture into non-clinical areas of evidence based decision-making and strategy. This is commendable.

2. Academic Standards

I am not working at an academic institution. The UK higher educational institutions that I have working experience of previously did not have post-graduate modules. I am therefore unable to compare academic standards across institutions.

3. The Assessment Process

Remote access to online assessments for a few students has been problematic due to individual wireless connection failures during assessment time periods. Students had been notified previously not to use a wireless connection for online assessments in case of such failures occurring. Students should not have used this mode of online access but instead they should have used an ethernet connection. As a result of the lost wireless connections alternative assessment papers had to be issued. These were verified by the external examiners and issued to the students promptly.

The leadership has taken action to seek an alternative method of online assessment so that issuing an alternative assessment paper may not be necessary. This may be possible if a method can be found so that the assessment paper is unable to be perused by the student but instead the assessment paper questions are answered in order then saved without return. This is currently being considered.

Although I have been invited to attend, I have not witnessed practical assessments as yet. I look forward to witnessing a practical assessment during the next academic year.

In addition, I have not had access to marking criteria or marking schemes but the marking of coursework and assessments appears fair and the standard across modules appears comparable.

Moreover, the programme leadership are aware of the need of a process for second marking a sample of assessments and are implementing a process to address this currently.

Furthermore, the requirement for anonymity of students' work is also being considered currently.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

There has been a huge leap forward in the organisation and administration of the programme from last year. Remote access to course content, teaching materials and assessment methods have been appreciated and this has been provided to an excellent standard. In addition, as an external examiner, I was able to observe an audit workshop and practical clinical workshops. This openness was much appreciated and allowed me to feedback to the course leaders. The feedback has been welcomed, appreciated and some has been reported to be implemented going forward.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The listening leadership is open, transparent and receptive to change, continuously wanting to "push back boundaries" and strive for excellence. The board of studies meeting revealed a cohesive team with a common purpose and direction. Communication amongst staff appears to be good.

Inviting experts employed in hospital services to participate in clinical workshops is laudable as is the different methods employed to communicate the learning to students via various platforms i.e. interactive lectures with case scenarios, practical clinical investigation of patients with ocular disease and the use of clinical devices including tutoring of analysis and data interpretation.

As mentioned previously, the leadership has taken on board feedback from a clinical workshop observation that I undertook this academic year. The aim of this feedback was to enhance what was all ready an excellent day of learning for the students and myself. Implementation of the recommendations outlined in the feedback below is being considered currently.

Please consider the following points for future practical days.

1. Allow the students an opportunity to reveal their understanding of the practical weekend. For instance, some students were anxious about whether the information given at the practical weekend would be assessed at the OSCE that they were to undertake at the end of the practical weekend. Finding out the expectations from the outset may release the students' anxiety. This could be done formally in the lecture hall with each student given an opportunity to express what they want to get out of the practical weekend and give the facilitator the opportunity to reassure or correct the general understanding of the practical weekend.
2. Provide a student workbook where workshop content such as purpose, aims and objectives can be described and where student notes can be written. Students can take this workbook with them and make notes as they go between the various workshops. This would give the students a handy reference for reflective learning later.
3. A facilitator led debrief for the whole student group in the lecture hall may be more useful rather than to let the students drift off in small groups at the end of their final workshop. Allow the students an opportunity to ask questions about the day's events with all students and workshop leaders in attendance in the lecture hall.
4. Issue a student feedback questionnaire and a workshop leader questionnaire to be collected by the facilitator for information to improve future practical days. Ensure that the feedback is returned before the students and workshop leaders leave the lecture hall.

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?	Y		
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?	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?	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?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?	Y		
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
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		

		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/A
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:

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