



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Elizabeth Ettore		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Liverpool (Emerita)		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Sociology and Social Sciences		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	5 July 2013

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 structure in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University is highly organised, effective and appropriate for social science undergraduate students in the UK. A wide selection of courses, which are contemporary, high quality and accessible as well as well-taught, are offered in this programme. In my experiences as an External Examiner at other Russell Group universities, Cardiff offers one of the best Sociology programmes in the UK.

2. Academic Standards

During my tenure as External Examiner, I have observed that excellent academic standards are maintained and that awards given for this programme are comparable to nationally-defined standards. The criteria for the determination of the overall classification for undergraduate modular schemes are clear and fair. The entire process is transparent and note-worthy. Students receive a degree which demands a solid level of understanding of sociological theories and methods.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process is fair and transparent. Students are provided with full information on what assessments are required for modules. They received excellent feedback from tutors. It is good to see that a wide range of grades are used in the assessment process which means that grades are able to reflect outstanding work as well as work which falls below the high standards which are normally required.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

In the three years that I have been External Examiner, I have seen changes to assessment regulations for undergraduate programmes (which have cut across the whole of Cardiff University). In December 2012, I received a letter from Professor Patricia Price, Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Standards, in which these changes were clearly outlined. It is interesting here to note that some of these issues had been raised at Board meetings in the past. That the University is taking these issues to hand is exemplary and will aid colleagues at Cardiff as well as External Examiners in their important work.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There are a number of noteworthy practices which I would like to mention:

- The continual embedding of quantitative surveys, national data sets, etc. into appropriate modules (This means that the degrees offered are highly competitive in that quantitative methods are utilised in modules by undergraduates. Very often in other Sociology Schools or Departments in the UK, there is a surplus of qualitative methods and quantitative methods tend to be minimised. At Cardiff, use of quantitative skills are very much encouraged and this is exemplary.)
- The support students receive when doing their third year dissertations (Dissertations are consistently of a high standard and reflect good understanding of complex issues.)
- The offering of courses which are contemporary, high quality and accessible content as well as well-taught (See under 1)
- The full support External examiners receive from the Administrators when carrying out their work.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as External Examiner for the Sociology and Social Sciences Programmes at Cardiff University. At our final Board meeting, there were a few issues which came up. I will mention them as well as others which I would like to recommend. These are mentioned in an effort to help improve the programme. These include: the ability of External Examiners to have access to the virtual learning environment (i.e. Learning Central); the availability of statistics for modules which indicate average standard deviations for comparability of standards and the outlining and agreeing of grades for all modules on power points at Boards rather than separate sheets of paper. As we know, each tutor and external examiner receives mounds of paper. (Perhaps we can save a few trees here.) In conclusion, the sociology and social sciences programmes at Cardiff University are in very good health and procedures in place for the delivering of these programmes are outstanding and enviable.

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?			
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

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