

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)



External Examiners are required to complete and submit Reports at least annually and within one month of the programme Examining Board.

Completed External Examiner Report Forms should be sent to:

ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses will be made upon receipt of this Report Form and upon receipt in hard copy of a completed External Examiner Claim Form for Reimbursement of Fees and Expenses and expenses receipts. This Report Form and the associated Claim Form may be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

Please note that External Examiner reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

Cardiff University prefers External Examiners to complete their Report Forms electronically and to submit them by email as indicated above. If, for any reason an External Examiner prefers to provide their report in hard copy it should be sent to *Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.*

PAYMENT OF FEES CANNOT BE AUTHORISED UNTIL RECEIPT OF THIS COMPLETED FORM AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM

Name of External Examiner: Professor Deborah Youdell

Institution: University of Birmingham

Programme of study and subject(s) examined: BA Education

Academic Year/Session to which this report applies: 2013/14

Freedom of Information Act

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

SECTION A

1.1 Programme Structure

Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).

The structure of the programme appears wholly appropriate, with good coherence across modules and a clear sense of development through modules.

The modules' contents appear to dovetail well, without overlap but with clear connection.

The modules certainly appear to give a solid grounding in educational studies across the foundation disciplines and the opportunity to engage with live policy and practice issues.

The location of the Education pathway in a wider Social Science programme does not appear to dilute the specialist nature of the programme and, I hope, enriches students experience and view – this is not necessarily evident in the assessed work although the dissertations and other assessments at the top end do reflect a solid social science location.

1.2 Comparability of Standards

Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?

The standard of the programme and the performance of students are most certainly comparable with that of similar programmes and student performance at leading research intensive universities.

1.3 The Examination Process

Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.

Assessment methods are diverse and there is a good balance and spread between approaches. I am very impressed by the range of approaches to assessment: long and short essays; a set of essays; long and short seen and unseen exams; a policy report; presentations. I am also impressed by the coordination of approaches across modules.

I am interested to hear about students' perceptions of the policy report and essay set – these are innovative and to be commended but are also likely to challenge students.

The criteria are appropriate and well applied. I am impressed by the inclusion of criteria-specific grading and feedback on the marking sheets. Overall these are well used.

Classification procedure is clear and appropriate. Assessment and examination processes are fair and consistent.

SECTION A (Continued)

1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been actioned?

NA

1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

I have been well-inducted with a comprehensive set of documentation supplied at the beginning of the academic year and clarification and supporting information readily supplied by a well-informed and organised administrator.

1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

(i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;

S10151 Conflict and Change: I very much like the policy design assessment task which clearly articulates with learning outcomes. Tasks of this sort are extremely useful for developing students' repertoire of skills

(ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;

(iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;

Across the dissertation and all modules the documentation makes assessment processes and expectations clear and in an accessible and comprehensive way that is exemplary

(iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme

Dissertation: the dissertation handbook is exemplary in terms of its clarity, accessibility and comprehensiveness. I very much like the use of a Dissertation Conference. I am also impressed by the status given to the research diary, including through the submission of this with the dissertation. Of those I saw, some had clearly been a consistent part of the student's research practice and as such extremely productive. I would like to commend the team on the quality of the pedagogy and the dissertations produced

1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.

SECTION B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are 'No'.

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	X		

2.2 Comments

All programme and module handbooks were supplied at the beginning of the year and included again when samples were sent out – this was helpful in ensuring I had the necessary documentation to hand.

Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	X		
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?	X		
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			X
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?	X		

2.7 Comments

Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	X		
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme's objectives?	X		
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?	X		
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	X		
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?			X

2.14 Comments

SECTION B (Continued)				
Coursework/Dissertations/Projects		Yes	No	N/A
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?	X		
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
2.17 Comments				
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		Yes	No	N/A
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			X
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?			X
2.20 Comments				
Examining Board Meeting		Yes	No	N/A
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		X	
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			X
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?			X
2.24	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(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	X		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?			X
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			X
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			X
2.28 Comments				
<p>I regret that I was unable to attend the external exam board this year. I asked if I could be present via a conference call or video link but this was not possible. I would strongly encourage the University to explore this possibility as a general principle in order to allow those at significant distance and/or with family responsibilities to be in attendance without the need for a substantial time away from home including an overnight stay. The cost of technology may well be offset by the savings on travel and overnight accommodation.</p> <p>I also asked the University to assist in identifying professional childcare facilities for the two days of the Board but this was not possible. It would be extremely helpful if the University was able to do this in order to support attendance of those with family responsibilities, for instance through a temporary extension of capacity at the University nursery or by holding a list of local facilities with whom the University has a relationship. This is a sector-wide need and one that I am asking my home university to explore.</p>				
<p>Signed: <u>Deborah Youdell</u> Date: <u>24 June 2013</u></p> <p>Please return this report by emailing to: ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk</p> <p>Your fee and expenses claim form, and any reports which cannot be emailed, should be sent to: Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.</p>				