

SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT

ACADEMIC SESSION 2014/2015

NB: This report template is for completion by Subject External Examiners (Tier One) including all External Examiners operating at programmes offered by our Collaborative Partners. Examiners appointed to programmes that have been permitted to operate in a single-tier Assessment Board structure should also complete this template.

Award External Examiners (Tier Two) should complete template EE4A.

SECTION A: NOTES FOR GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THIS FORM

- 1 Please use this form for submitting, electronically, your annual External Examiner's Report. The report will be available to staff and students and receive wide circulation within the Institution as part of our Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process. It will also be available more widely on request, so we ask that you do not refer to staff or students by name. Where staff or students are referred to by name, the report will be redacted to remove these details. The report, when submitted, will become the property of the University and will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act as applicable.
- 2 Sections B, D, E, F, J, K and M are for completion by all External Examiners. Other Sections should be completed where appropriate.
- 3 Once completed, the form should be submitted electronically to the appropriate Head of Faculty Student and Academic Services at the email address given at the end of this template.
- 4 Your Report should be submitted to the University within six weeks of the date of the final Assessment Board meeting which dealt with cohort(s) of students to which the report refers. Programme Teams are required to respond to External Examiners concerning issues raised in the report. This response will be completed as Section N within this report, which will be returned to you following consideration at the next scheduled Programme Committee meeting.

In completing your report, please use language that is readily understood by all readers.

Thank you for your continued support and contribution to the University's quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

SECTION B:

1	External Examiner Name:	Dr Mary Wild
2	Assessment Board(s) of which a member:	Education Tier 1
3	Programme(s) for which the examiner has been approved:	Early Years & Childhood Studies
4	Specialist/subject area(s) examined:	
5	Department/School:	
6	Faculty/Division:	Faculty of Education
7	Collaborative provision: (please supply names of all partners and details of provision)	FdA Early Years Macclesfield College

SECTION C: INDUCTION AND BRIEFING			
(To be completed <u>only if this is your first report and you are commencing your period of appointment as an External Examiner at MMU</u>)			
C1	Can you confirm that:	YES	NO
	before taking on the role of External Examiner, you were sufficiently briefed on the nature of your responsibilities, including the units to which you were appointed to examine?		
	you have been provided with detail on where to receive guidance on your role as External Examiner at MMU?		
	you have been offered the opportunity to meet the programme team/faculty staff where you have requested this?		
	you have received the programme specification and relevant unit proformas from the Programme Leader?		
C2	Do you find:	YES	NO
	the External Examiners' website (http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/casqe/examiners/) to be clear and helpful?		
	the External Examiners' Handbook a useful briefing tool?		
	the MMU <i>Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations on External Examining</i> on the role and responsibilities of External Examiners to be clear and appropriate?		
C3	What comments or recommendations do you have on the preparation process that we provide for new External Examiners?		

SECTION D: ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS			
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>			
D1	Were you given access to the following? (Please make specific comment in D2 if you have answered NO to any of the questions below. If the question is not applicable to you, please indicate by N/A in the YES column)	YES	NO
	Information on the dates and arrangements for Assessment Board(s) to which you were invited;	✓	
	Programme handbooks and programme specifications for each set of units you are responsible for externally examining;	✓	
	Unit proformas for all units you are responsible for externally examining;	✓	
	Draft examination papers;	N/A	
	Assessment briefs and marking criteria;	✓	
	<u>Where appropriate</u> , details of arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?	N/A	
	Sufficient information for you to carry out your duties and responsibilities;	✓	
	University (and, where relevant, unit-specific and programme-specific) assessment regulations.	✓	
D2	What comments do you have which could improve the communication with External Examiners? (Please make specific comment here if you have answered NO to any of the questions in D1.)		

D3	Have responses, by the Programme Team, Department or Faculty, to issues raised in your previous reports been appropriately addressed, and to your satisfaction? (If this is your first report, please indicate by N/A in the YES column)	YES	NO
		✓	
If you have answered NO, please provide further details.			
D4	Are there any other administrative or procedural matters that you would wish to draw to the attention of the University?	YES	NO
			x
If you have answered YES, please provide details.			

SECTION E: ASSESSMENT PROCESSES			
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>			
E1	Assessment - Can you confirm that: (Please make specific comment in E4 if you have answered NO to any of the questions below.)	YES	NO
	the curriculum on each unit you have examined remains current?	✓	
	the curriculum on each unit you have examined remains coherent?	✓	
	units at the same level within a single programme are set at a comparable standard?	✓	
	the MMU procedures for the verification, marking and moderation of assessments (available on the External Examiners' Website at: http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/casqe/regulations/docs/verification_marking_moderation.pdf) provides you with a sufficient sample of scripts for each unit you are responsible for externally examining?	✓	
	MMU is maintaining the threshold academic standards for its units and levels of study in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark statements?	✓	
	the types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students, the respective level of study and the expected learning outcomes?	✓	
	the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the unit and stage of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the institution's policies and regulations (or those of the PSRB where exemption/variation from MMU Regulations has been granted)?	✓	
	the method of internal marking at unit level is fair and reliable and of an appropriate standard, and that the marking scheme has been properly and consistently applied?	✓	
	the scripts were marked in such a way, and where appropriate comments added, to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	✓	
	you have been made aware of procedures governing: exceptional factors, academic integrity (professional suitability and misconduct), and borderline performances in relation to the units that you have examined?	✓	
	arrangements were made to consider your comments?	✓	

E2	Dissertation/Project <i>[for completion only if you have considered dissertation/project-related work]</i> Can you confirm that: (Please make specific comment in Q: E4 if you have answered NO to any of the questions below.)	YES	NO
	the choice of subjects for dissertations is appropriate?	✓	
	the method and standard of assessment and internal moderation is appropriate?	✓	
E3	Assessment Board - Can you confirm: (Please make specific comment in Q: E4 if you have answered NO to any of the questions below)	YES	NO
	that you are satisfied with the conduct of the Assessment Board?	✓	
	that you are satisfied with the recommendations of the Assessment Board?	✓	
	the comparability of University assessment processes with other HEIs with which you are familiar?	✓	
	that you were able to attend all scheduled meetings of the Assessment Board(s)		×
	that <u>if you were unable to attend</u> any meetings of the Assessment Board(s), you have been involved in the assessment process? (If this question is not applicable, please leave both columns blank)	✓	
E4	What matters do you wish to bring to the Programme Team or University's attention in relation to assessment processes? (Please make specific comment here if you have answered NO to any of the questions in E1 – E3 inclusive.)		
	Attendance at the September board was not possible but samples of work were sent to me in good time and I was able to comment on these for the Board. There was just one module, 226Z001, where I was unable to access the marker comments on Moodle.		
E5	Do you wish to raise any matters in relation to the University's Assessment Regulations that should be considered by the University Registrar?		

SECTION F: STUDENT PERFORMANCE	
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>	
F1	Please comment on what you infer about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods as indicated by marks distribution at unit level.
<p>I was impressed by the overall quality of the work I saw. The level of work has always been sound but this year there appeared to be a positive step change in the quality of critical engagement.</p> <p>There was a relatively high number of refers on the Research Project proposal but this may be intended to be formative as a gateway through to the dissertation.</p>	
F2	Please comment on the overall academic standards and students achievements in relation to their peers in other UK Higher Education Institutions with which you are familiar.
Commensurate with other programmes.	
F3	Please comment on whether the standards of the units for which you have responsibility are appropriate for the qualification in this subject and address relevant Subject Benchmark statements?
<p>In accordance with all Benchmarks etc.</p> <p>The team are commendably proactive in refining their offer as and when external environments and requirements change e.g. in relation to the Early Years Teacher.</p>	
F4	Where the programme has any approved work-based learning, professional practice or placement element, please comment on student performance and achievement of intended learning outcomes.
There is a strong connection between theory and practice although the programme is not assessing practice directly.	

SECTION G: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION	
(Only to be completed by examiners with a responsibility for collaborative provision)	
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>	
G1	Please comment specifically on student achievement of programmes delivered by MMU Collaborative Partners. Where there is more than one provider, if your comments relate to one specific institution (including MMU) please specify to which provider your comments refer.

It was very helpful to have the different cohorts identified in the sample I was sent. Attainment levels from Macclesfield were commensurate with the MMU cohorts.	
G2	For programmes operating at more than one site, please comment on the comparability of delivery between the sites.
I did not witness actual delivery but the degree of integration in terms of marking and moderation across sites was clearly evidenced. If available it would be useful to see some student evaluations from each cohort.	

SECTION H: PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY, REGULATORY BODY REQUIREMENTS (Only to be completed by those External Examiners responsible for PSRB related units of study)	
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>	
H1	Please comment specifically on how the programme reflects any PSRB requirements, commenting specifically on relevant professional issues such as fitness to practice, and any feature that relates to the specific discipline.

Please note that there is no SECTION I

SECTION J: GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT <i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>	
J1	Please note particular elements of good practice and innovation that you have identified relating to learning, teaching and assessment.
<p>The quality of the Moodle site and the regularity by which it is kept up to date.</p> <p>The primacy given to ethical considerations in all aspects of the programme.</p> <p>The quality of dissertations was particularly high this year . It was clear that students had been given detailed advice and support around topic choice and the effective structuring of an extended piece of writing. Good methodological understanding came across strongly- students seem to understand the issues around methodology and the relevance to their own projects.</p>	

Excellent level of individualised feedback and formative advice with clear goals and targets to improve work at all levels of attainment.	
J2	Please note opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students and provide suggestions for improvements based on your experience at other institutions.
<p>The interlinking between theory and practice is consistently strong but the team may wish to consider some opportunities and pathways that are more explicitly philosophical and conceptual. This would enhance developmental opportunities for students who may wish to pursue a non-practice based career following graduation.</p> <p>The use of case studies as a focus for many of the assignment activities is a useful strategy but the team may wish to encourage some students to draw on a range of case studies across the course rather than re-evaluate the same case study across more than one module.</p> <p>Overall the feedback given to students is of high quality and this is applies across all first markers. The level of feedback from second makers is more variable and this may be understandable given the sheer volume of work to be marked. It would not possible to provide in depth comments by a second maker on every script but it would be helpful perhaps if the team explained the policy around second marker feedback to students. This would be helpful to staff as well as students as it would establish clear parameters and expectations for all concerned.</p>	
J3	Please comment on amendments/enhancements made to provision, assessment or administrative arrangements following comments you have previously made?
<p>The team have responded fully to all suggestions previously made.</p> <p>Particular examples include the greater counselling for students around undertaking the practice strand, greater use of individualised comments in tutor feedback and the specific steer towards the use of academic journals rather than generic textbooks.</p> <p>Procedurally there was much clearer signposting to units and scripts through Moodle and the team responded to my request to view some example scripts from individuals across a range of modules.</p>	
<p>SECTION K: PROGRAMME/SUBJECT OVERVIEW</p> <p><i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i></p>	
K1	Based on your involvement with the programme throughout the academic session, please provide an overview of the programme or subject including, for example, comment on the coherence of stage or programme assessment strategies or any other matters that you would wish to raise.

Throughout the year the team are regularly reviewing and updating their offer and they are assiduous in consulting me before implementing changes. The Early Childhood context is fast moving in both policy and theoretical directions and the team work hard to maintain currency and to offer the students cutting edge insights. The use of Moodle is well thought out and instrumental in maintaining this sense of a dynamic field.

The level of detail provided in assessment feedback is highly commendable especially given the volume of work and short time frames for marking. The switch to online marking and moderation now seems to be firmly established with all markers engaging well with these processes.

The high profile given to ethical approaches is a consistent strength of the programme. There is a genuine sense that this is centre stage in the course of all projects and it is accompanied by sensitive and considered reflection on the part of the students.

As mentioned above, the degree of critical engagement and reflection was very high this year. I understand from discussion with the team that a number of team members are currently engaged in doctoral level studies and this level of staff development would seem to be having a positive knock on effect in terms of student understanding and attainment. There were some exceptionally thoughtful assignments and a wide and often original array of topics is covered by students. In general there was a much more integrated use of theory to interrogate practice and vice versa. As a consequence I really enjoyed reading the students work and in many instances I learnt something new from their scholarship.

K2	Where the programme has any approved work-based learning, professional practice or placement element, please comment on the organisation and delivery of such activities within the curriculum.
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The links between theory and practice are manifest well in assignments, which suggests a secure practical base. However the new links to practice in relation to EYT would make this a sensible focus for consideration next year.

SECTION L: FINAL REPORT

(To be completed only if this is your final report and you are completing your period of appointment as External Examiner)

L1	Please provide a summary of the way you have noted the Assessment Boards developing during the period of your appointment. Please report on whether consistency of standards and student achievement has been maintained across cohorts during your period of appointment. Please provide any recommendations you may have for their future development. Please also report on your overall experience as an External Examiner at MMU.
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SECTION M: SUMMARY OF ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE PROGRAMME TEAM

Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders

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M1	Programme teams are responsible for providing External Examiners with a written response to their External Examiner Report. What particular issues would you specifically wish to see addressed in this response?
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This Section should include details of all issues to be addressed, including those raised earlier in the report. Issues to be addressed as a priority should be identified as such within this Section.

To consider the balance between practice led and more theoretical and philosophical strands.

To share / articulate the links to particular practice based routes e.g. YET.

To consider the range of case studies drawn upon in the various modules.

Would be good to see some student evaluations.

SECTION N: RESPONSE BY PROGRAMME TEAM TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT (to be completed by the Programme Leader following consideration of the report at the next scheduled Programme Committee meeting.)

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Please provide a detailed response to all issues raised within the report

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SECTION O: <i>(For office use only immediately upon receipt of report)</i>	
Date report received:	16-07-15
Date report acknowledged:	16-07-15
Date forwarded to CASQE, Programme Leader(s), Dean(s), Head(s), Programme(s) Officer(s):	20-07-15
Date forwarded to Partner Organisation(s) (if applicable):	20-07-15
Date formal response (Section N) sent to External Examiner:	

<u>SUBMISSION DETAILS</u> <i>(Please submit your report to the appropriate email address below)</i>		
Manchester School of Art	Mr V Fitzpatrick	artdes-eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Science	Mr V Fitzpatrick	hlss.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Hollings Faculty	Mrs M Austin	hollings.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Mrs M Austin	se.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care	Ms S Sharpe	hpsc.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Faculty of Education	Ms S Sharpe	education.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
Faculty of Business and Law	Mr N Legge	buslaw.eereports@mmu.ac.uk
MMU Cheshire	Mrs H Legge	crw.eereport@mmu.ac.uk