

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:	Lynsey Melhuish
2	Assessment Board(s) of which a member:	IDS Foundation Degree Board (Collaborative)
3	Programme(s) for which the examiner has been approved:	FdA Public and Community Services
4	Specialist/subject area(s) examined:	Whole programme
5	Department/School:	Interdisciplinary Studies
6	Faculty/Division:	MMU Cheshire
7	Collaborative provision: (please supply names of all partners and details of provision)	Mid Cheshire College, South Cheshire College, 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?		
	<p>I would reiterate my views from last year that the process from MMU was clear and training events and reference to supporting information and materials (on the internet) have been made clear</p> <p>Communications with the Link Tutor and partner colleges was significantly lower this year due to changes in staff I understand and therefore I was not provided with any further material about the course itself, other than what I had gleaned from the previous year. I think the programme area Link Tutor and Course Leaders need to have clearer roles regarding liaison with an External Examiner.</p>		
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;		√
	Assessment briefs and marking criteria;		some
	<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.)		
	<p>Despite my report and recommendations on these issues last year the programme materials were limited and sporadic. For future programmes I would strongly urge that this is addressed. I can only assume that as the course is running out this year and there were numerous staff changes at the end of last year both within MMU and the partner colleges, that staff were not adequately trained / knowledgeable of these requirements for the External Examiner. It did make my role more difficult as I was tending to have to ask for information as opposed to be provided with briefs / samples etc as per standard University practice (from my experiences)</p>		
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.

I am afraid none of the recommendations / suggestions have been addressed though as a minimum the general standard of work / grading and feedback was appropriate for the level across the partner college samples that I saw.

Briefs and samples were less than previous years, although I did see a good range of samples from Mid Cheshire College on the day and some unit samples from South Cheshire College prior to the event. Unfortunately due to mitigating circumstances (a bereavement) Macclesfield was unable to provide samples on the day. However they had been recommended as good practice in the previous year.

No interim event was arranged to my knowledge and collaboration across the partners was limited

D4	Are there any other administrative or procedural matters that you would wish to draw to the attention of the University?	YES	NO
			√

If you have answered YES, please provide details.

*No more than I have raised already

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?	√ (adequate but limited)	
	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?			n/a
the method and standard of assessment and internal moderation is appropriate?			n/a
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 if you were unable to attend 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)			n/a
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.)		
<p>Clearer evidence of internal moderation required (with comments)</p> <p>Consistency of feedback across partner colleges (detail / length / annotation through scripts / suggested areas for improvement plus layout and format of briefs / marking criteria / feedback etc)</p>			
E5	Do you wish to raise any matters in relation to the University's Assessment Regulations that should be considered by the University Registrar?		
No			

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.
Samples provided from Mid- Cheshire and South Cheshire college for Level 5 (as a final year course) was appropriate and relatively consistent in terms of general quality. However Mid-Cheshire had some particularly good examples of application of academic theory and referencing in places where as South Cheshire was a little more sporadic depending on the unit and student. No samples were provided from Macclesfield as discussed but last years Level 4 & Level 5 samples were good and appropriate (recognised as best practice)	
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.
Fairly consistent for partner college HE programmes. Academic / theoretical rigour / referencing tends to be less than University standards overall but is still satisfactory.	
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?
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.
Mid-Cheshire provided some very good examples of work based learning portfolio evidence which showed that the students have been gaining some very effective real world (professional experiences). Suggestions were made that this should be applied more to academic theory during the written stages ie reflecting between theory and practice	

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.
As previously stated each of the three partner colleges appear to be delivering an appropriate level of HE provision. Macclesfield College demonstrated a slightly higher level of academic application for the samples reviewed last year and Mid-Cheshire were similar this year. South Cheshire College still has some good sample work but tends to be mostly in the low 2.2 to low 2.1 and students across the partnership should be supported to develop their academic /Harvard skills further from Level 3 BTEC to more critical and theoretical application at HE level.	
G2	For programmes operating at more than one site, please comment on the comparability of delivery between the sites.
Grades were agreed across the two college samples seen this year and for Macclesfield last year. However general consistency of delivery / systems / format / quality and depth of feedback / marking etc could be improved if the programme was continuing	

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.
n/a	

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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid Cheshire's work based learning unit in terms of the portfolio of evidence and experiences that the students have gained 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of Mid-Cheshire's samples which demonstrates some good academic depth and critical / reflective work worthy of Level 5 (and with good referencing) - South Cheshire provided samples early and briefs (albeit for retrospective approval)
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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The course is closing therefore feedback is limited and I would reiterate all that I put forward in last years report. However to add to this I would suggest that any further collaboration partnerships between MMU and FE colleges needs to have a more structured / consistent approach and there should be a dedicated member of staff at MMU to provide the co-ordination and support needed across the three FE colleges
J3	Please comment on amendments/enhancements made to provision, assessment or administrative arrangements following comments you have previously made?
	n/a
SECTION K: PROGRAMME/SUBJECT OVERVIEW	
<i>Please do not mention staff or students by name as your report will be made available to students and other stakeholders</i>	
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.
	<p>I only saw samples for Level 5 as it is a course that is running out this year.</p> <p>For future roles – recorded evidence of presentations and practical elements would be helpful</p> <p>My feedback still stands from 13.14 report and could be taken further for future collaboration partnerships – which was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Suggest a collaborative event at least once a year between 3 partner colleges to ensure consistency / sharing of good practice across the programmes</i> - <i>Assignment briefs and unit specifications should be provided before the start of the next academic year for review & where possible – consistency of briefs and format/ content across colleges or at least ensuring the briefs match the assessment criteria clearly for each unit</i> - <i>Ensure consistency of feedback / annotation & moderation across all 3 colleges & for all</i>

units

- *Ensure samples are provided for ALL units in the programme OR make clear where colleges are not delivering and therefore samples are not required*
- *All three colleges to look at systems for developing & supporting students through the transition from Level 3 to Level 4 focusing specifically on an increase and wider use of academic sources / reference to academic theory for undergraduate level & use of Harvard referencing to ensure the quality of work meets HE academic standards and prepares students effectively should they progress to a Level 6 top up degree programme*
- *Attendance by all 3 partner colleges at an Interim Event with the External Examiner in the middle of the year (eg January/Feb time) & ideally with sample work/student reps in attendance – this could form the collaboration event suggested above. Alternatively for the 3 partner colleges to be able to accommodate the EE at their own colleges on a particular day in Jan/Feb.*

All of the above is aimed at helping partner colleges work most efficiently and effectively together to provide students with a consistent and high quality HE learning experience. This is likely to be irrelevant as the course is closing but I would suggest these comments are taken forward for future collaborations. Partner FE colleges need more consistent support from MMU to deliver HE effectively and consistently.

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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As previously stated – Mid-Cheshire’s work based portfolio was effective though I would like to have seen more application of theory to practice

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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As this is my final year due to the course closing I would like to offer the following comments.

The general advice / materials for the EE role has been extremely detailed and thorough and this is to be commended. However the actual programme information and link tutor and partner college liaison has been less clear both last year and this year.

I provided an extensive report and additional information for 13.14 to aid the collaboration partnership and unfortunately due to staff changes and pressures both at MMU and partner colleges – my recommendations and feedback has not really been taken forward. Therefore I would like to just outline the following points as my closing /final EE report for the programme

- I took over the EE role 13.14 (midway through academic year: interim visit & Board visit was completed)
- Samples were provided from all 3 partner colleges at Level 4 & Level 5 in 13.14 (where applicable)
- Extensive proposals / suggestions were put forward to improve collaboration / consistency in 14.15 but these do not appear to have been embraced
- **Change of link tutor with MMU & staff within partner colleges has impacted on the communication and collaboration of the partnership** – this has hindered the ability of the partnership to respond to suggestions / recommendations from the previous report to improve consistency and overall collaboration
- Final year / closing course (only Level 5 work)
- I made contact with the Quality office / link tutor and partners through the year for any briefs / samples etc but this has been limited
- Full briefs / samples were not provided from all three partner colleges for this year & nor was an interim visit arranged
- However as a closing course I am satisfied that the samples I have seen are appropriate for the level and that there is satisfactory grading/ feedback etc AND some good examples of HE work in places in both South Cheshire College and Mid-Cheshire College (and as evidenced last year from Macclesfield College)
- It is disappointing that the collaboration has not been able to move forward since last year
- **Communication from all three colleges to the EE has been made in the year, although limited, sporadic & in different ways** and at times it has felt like the EE has had to chase MMU and the colleges.

I would like to conclude by stating that whilst the EE role has been 'fleeting', I have appreciated the opportunity to be involved and would like to reiterate my professional opinion that it is disappointing that the course / partnership is not continuing and I would recommend MMU and the partner colleges review this in the future. Particularly in light of South Cheshire College not recruiting the HNC/D in the last two years which would suggest that the validation from a University is paramount to success in HE to be delivered at FE colleges (ie the University brand provides strength).

I believe there is a market (demonstrated through strong BTEC public service numbers) –

and I understand Mid-Cheshire have recruited for their HND/C. However they have stated that they are concerned that their college will lose the access to journals etc and all the resources and learning support which is beneficial through a University collaboration. I understand they would prefer a University collaboration if it could be progressed in the future.

MMU would have to commit more time and support to the partner colleges if a collaboration took place in the future to respond to my areas for improvement (particularly regarding consistency etc)

I offered at the Exam Board, to be a critical friend to any discussion or review regarding future FE/HE collaborations and/or public service / health and social welfare related course

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

M1	<p>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?</p> <p>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.</p>
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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.)

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

SECTION O:

(For office use only immediately upon receipt of report)

Date report received:	06.07.15
Date report acknowledged:	06.07.15
Date forwarded to CASQE, Programme Leader(s), Dean(s), Head(s), Programme(s) Officer(s):	06.07.15
Date forwarded to Partner Organisation(s) (if applicable):	06.07.15
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