

MODULE EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

Each module external examiner is required to make an annual written report to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. You are asked to complete this report within ONE calendar month of the last relevant Examining Board of the academic year and return it to the Academic Office. A separate form should be completed for each appointment held. **NOTE THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT HANDWRITTEN REPORTS.**

Please note that module external examiners' reports are circulated, upon receipt, to the Programme Director, Head of School, Dean of Faculty, and Dean of Quality and Standards for appropriate action to be taken. A copy of the final report of an external examiner will also be passed to his or her successor.

Payment of fees will be authorised once the report has been received.

(PLEASE DO NOT REFER TO STUDENTS OR STAFF BY NAME ANYWHERE IN THIS REPORT)

Report

1. EXAMINER DETAILS

Please ensure you complete **all** sections.

Name of Module External Examiner:	Stephen Jacobs								
Programme(s) to which the examined modules contribute:	MA Cultural Astronomy and Astrology								
Faculty/School/Centre:									
Level: <i>(please tick)</i>	Undergraduate				Postgraduate		☒		
Includes Level 7 dissertations/projects	Yes	☒	No	If "Yes", please complete the Report on Level 7 Dissertations/Projects					
Year of appointment									
Year of tenure: <i>(please tick)</i>	1st	☒	2nd		3rd		Final		
Date of related Examining Board:	16/06/2017								

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Comments within this report regarding teaching quality information may be made publicly available through the University website or other selected means.

2. GENERAL ISSUES

Undergraduate and postgraduate modules excluding Level 7 dissertation/project modules

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. You may wish to expand on your answers in the box provided. You can provide more details in the relevant parts of Section 3.

- | | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.1 Programme materials | | | |
| a. Did you have access to all relevant programme handbooks and regulations at an appropriate time? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

I was provided with access to the relevant programme handbooks and academic regulations in plenty of time. Both the administrative support team and the Programme Director were very prompt in supplying all the relevant material, and answering any questions, which really helped me in my role as External Examiner.

2.2 Approval of assessment instruments contributing to the final award

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Were you asked to approve all the assessments that may contribute to a final award? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Were the nature and level of the assessments appropriate? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Were the methods of assessment well-balanced and fair? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. Did the assessments reflect the intended learning outcomes? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. Did you receive appropriate responses to any comments you may have made on assessments? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

I was provided with all the assessment tasks for all the modules on the MA programme in a timely manner. The assessment regime for all the modules are well thought out, and will develop students' academic and research skills. The level of detail provided on the instructions for each of the assignments is excellent, and provides students with extremely clear guidance on what is expected for each assignment.

However, it might be useful for students to see a more explicit list that details the marking criteria for each assessment on the instruction sheets.

Assessments are clearly consistent with the stated learning outcomes for all modules

2.3 Sample of examinations

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to have access to a sufficient number of examination scripts? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. Was there clear evidence of an internal verification/moderation process? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. Was the work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Comments:

There are no examinations for this course

2.4 Sample of coursework/continuously assessed work

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to have access to a sufficient amount of coursework? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Was there clear evidence of an internal verification/moderation process? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. Was the work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

I had access to a sufficient number of samples through Moodle. Although I had a little problem accessing Moodle initially, this glitch was sorted out extremely promptly and efficiently by the administration support.

Marking was consistent and appropriate for all the sample of assignments that I looked at. There is clear evidence of moderation. Both the first marker and the moderator adding comments to each of the scripts.

I am very impressed by the level of feedback provided by all the markers. Markers provided encouraging and positive feedback as well as constructive criticism for the weaker pieces of work. It is extremely good practice that students are clear about what they did well as well as areas that need to be improved upon.

It was also good to see that markers indicated to students who achieved at the higher end how they could improve on their work.

All markers provided useful and appropriate comments on both style and substance. Consequently, students will clearly be able to understand the grades that they achieved for their work.

However, I did wonder whether a grid which lists the marking criteria (e.g subject knowledge, theoretical engagement etc.) along the edge and level of achievement along the top (e.g a range from excellent to poor) with markers ticking the relevant cell, might give students more clarity as to the strengths and weaknesses of their work. I discussed this with the Programme Director, and realise that this is problematic given that work is submitted electronically via Turnitin, but a marking grid could be used in an informal way.

2.5 Sample of performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

- | | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to have access to a suitable sample of performances / recitals / appropriate professional placements? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. Was there clear evidence of an internal verification/moderation process? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. Was the work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Comments:

Not relevant for this programme



2.6 Undergraduate dissertations/project reports

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. Was there clear evidence of an internal verification/moderation process? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. Was the work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Comments

2.7 Examining Boards

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Were you able to attend the appropriate External Examining Boards? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Was (Were) the Examining Board(s) conducted properly and in accordance with the University's regulations? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Were you satisfied with the recommendations and decisions of the Examining Board(s)? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

The Exam Board was run properly. It made the process much more efficient that the External Examining Board only looked at transcripts of the students who had issues, and not at the students whose transcripts were unproblematic.

(this box will expand as you type)

Signature:

S B Jacobs

Date: 20/06/17

3. GENERAL REPORT

Undergraduate and postgraduate modules excluding Level 7 dissertation/project modules

In compiling this report you are asked to include specific comments on the following points:

(PLEASE DO NOT REFER TO STUDENTS OR STAFF BY NAME)

3.1	Matters concerning assessment - <i>in particular</i>:
• The structure, organisation, design, links to learning outcomes and marking • The consistency and rigour of marking • The appropriateness of the assessment strategies	
Comments on undergraduate modules:	
Comment on postgraduate modules: The assessments are well designed to develop students' academic and research skills. There are a number of assignments which require students to critically engage with academic articles, and also assignments that require students to conduct primary research. These assessments on the taught modules have a formative dimension and help students develop their academic abilities, and this is clearly reflected in some of the extremely accomplished dissertations that I saw. All staff clearly take a great deal of time and effort in the marking, providing students with very detailed and constructive comments, both in the texts and in the general overview of the work	
3.2	The standards of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by students:
• In relation to the award to which modules under consideration contribute • In relation to those in previous years • In relation to national frameworks and/or professional body standards • The strengths and weaknesses of the cohort	
Comments on undergraduate modules:	
Comments on postgraduate modules: Students, even at the weaker end of the cohort, are clearly engaged and passionate about the subject, and this reflects the passion and commitment of the teaching team. The work at the top end of the scale is excellent.	
3.3	The comparability of standards with those at other similar institutions with which you are familiar.
Comments on undergraduate modules:	
Comments on postgraduate modules: The work is clearly comparable with MA (Level 7) work at other HE institutions, and if anything the work I saw is of a slightly higher standard, particularly at the higher end of achievement.	

3.4 The conduct and operation of the Examining Board.

Comments:

I was surprised that External Examiners were not asked for a brief comment on their respective Course programmes at the end of the Board. However, I do not necessarily see this as being essential.

A short glossary of the acronyms/codes (e.g. work not submitted) used on transcripts would be useful as every institution would have been useful.

3.5 Any general observations (including examples of good practice) which you deem appropriate based on the experience of examining. Constructive suggestions and recommendations for future action are particularly welcomed.

Comments on undergraduate modules:

Comments on postgraduate modules:

There is an impressive amount of learning support material on Moodle for the modules. The videos introduction to modules and individual sessions are very useful, providing brief overviews and elucidating the major themes of the modules/topics. Online seminars are also extremely well thought out, and necessary as this is a distant learning programme.

There are some useful tips on study skills – such as how to find Ebooks, writing critical reviews etc in the VLE. It is clear that a great deal of hard work and thought has gone into producing the learning support resources in Moodle.

Overall, the level of support and resources for a distant learning programme and use of the VLE is exemplary.

3.6 New / Continuing / Ending appointment.

- For new appointments; please comment on the opportunities to view reports from previous external examiners and whether recommendations have been acted upon;
- For continuing appointments; please comment on whether the points raised by you or other relevant external examiners in the previous year have been responded to satisfactorily;
- For appointments which are ending; please provide any general observations which you deem appropriate based on your experience of examining the programme.

Comments:

This is my first year as external examiner, and I have been provided with the final report from the previous external examiner. Overall, the previous external's report is extremely positive, and consistent with my comments on the impressive and constructive feedback given by the markers. There are no specific recommendations on this report, other than for staff to carry on their good work – and this is very apparent in the samples of students' work that I looked at this academic year.

Signature:

S B Jacobs

Date:

20/06/2017

Please return the completed Module External Examiner's Report Form to:

Academic Office
 (Ref: Module External Examiner's Report)
 University of Wales Trinity Saint David
 College Road
 Carmarthen
 SA31 3EP

Email: quality@uwtsd.ac.uk
 (Subject: Module External Examiner's Report)

REPORT ON LEVEL 7 DISSERTATIONS/PROJECTS

Where the appointment includes responsibility for Level 7 dissertation/project modules worth 60 credits or more, module external examiners are required to complete the report below.

	Yes	No	N/A
a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?	☒	☐	☐
b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	☒	☐	☐
c. Were all dissertations/projects marked by two internal examiners?	☒	☐	☐
d. Was the work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	☒	☐	☐

Comments:

The dissertations covered a wide variety of topics and methodological approaches, which is what I would expect from this MA programme. It was also very encouraging to see that students conducted primary research and critical engaged with published literature. This is clearly indicative of the formative preparation in the taught part of this programme

All the dissertations were double marked, and both markers provided extensive and constructive feedback.

(this box will expand as you type)

Please provide specific comments on the following points:

D1	Matters concerning assessment - <i>in particular</i>:
- The structure, organisation, design, links to learning outcomes and marking - The consistency and rigour of marking - The appropriateness of the assessment strategies	
Comments: The standards of marking are extremely rigorous. All the dissertations were double marked I was very impressed by the full detailed and constructive feedback by all the markers – both first and second – of the dissertation. However, given such a large marking team for the modules, I did wonder if there was a mechanism for ensuring marking consistency across the team of markers for all the dissertations. I was asked by the Programme Director to in particular scrutinise two of the dissertations as soon as possible – one which the first marker just passed and the second marker had just failed, the other was just a fail. I sent my comments back to the PD, who then discussed these with the marking team. This is a very clear indication of concern by the marking team for getting the grading to accurately reflect the level of the work. In other words, I believe this to be good practice, and contributed to ensuring consistency of standards across a diverse marking team. (this box will expand as you type)	
D2	The standards of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by students:
- In relation to the award to which the dissertation/project module contribute - In relation to those in previous years - In relation to national frameworks and/or professional body standards - The strengths and weaknesses of the cohort	

Comments:

There was a range, as you would expect, of standards in the dissertations. Even at the weaker end of achievement, despite flaws in the work, students demonstrated a passion for the topics that they wrote about. At the higher end I saw some extremely accomplished work. One dissertation was clearly publishable, and the markers gave some very useful advice on how the dissertation could be reworked for publication.

(this box will expand as you type)

D3 The comparability of standards with those at other similar institutions with which you are familiar.

Comments:

At the weaker and mid-range level of achievement the dissertations are clearly comparable with other HE institutions. At the higher end of achievement, the level of work is higher than I have seen in other HEIs.

(this box will expand as you type)

Signature:

S B Jacobs

Date:

20/06/2017

Supplementary Reports

Supplementary Report for Partner Institutions, Multiple Locations or Modes of Study

For programmes of study which are delivered at more than one location or through more than one mode of study, module external examiners are required to complete the supplementary report below, highlighting any location/mode specific matters.

S1	Please summarise your findings in respect of provision offered at a partner institution, other location or different mode of study.
	- Note where any issues or examples of good practice identified in the General Report above are linked to a particular partner institution, a particular location of delivery or mode of delivery; - Note where there are perceptible differences between partner institutions, locations of delivery or modes of delivery.
	Comments on undergraduate modules:
	(this box will expand as you type)
	Comments on postgraduate modules:
	(this box will expand as you type)

Signature:

Date:

Supplementary Report on Teaching Practice

For programmes of study with one or more teaching practice modules, module external examiners are required to complete the supplementary report below, highlighting any matters concerning teaching practice modules.

S1	Matters concerning teaching practice modules:
Comments: (this box will expand as you type)	

Signature:

Date: