

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Dentistry
Subject(s):	Restorative Dentistry
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Clinical Dentistry - Restorative
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards**Points of innovation and/or good practice**

Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.

The dissertations undertaken by the students mainly involved reviews, some extensive systematic reviews or literature reviews which will have taken an enormous amount of work, dedication and effort from both students and staff.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

My previous recommendation was to increase the weighting for the final verbal presentation of the dissertation from the current 5% to 10% of available marks for that module. This hasn't been implemented for this cohort, however proposed changes from 2018 to the weighting, which I am in agreement with, are being submitted and are summarized in the following table:

RESEARCH PROJECT MARKS	Current weighting of marks	Proposed weighting of marks
Dissertation	75%	70%
Literature review	10%	10%
In course assessment	10%	10%
Verbal presentation	5%	10%

Matters for Urgent Attention

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box

None

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	N

3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N
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For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y / N
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y / N
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y / N
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School

N/A

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

The overall programme was well constructed and at the appropriate level for the ward of MSc in Restorative Dentistry as were the aims and intended learning outcomes which meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark. The programme is comparable to other institutions national standards. The assessment methods were appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)

For the research module for the distance learning MSc programme, each student undertook a systematic review or literature review of a clinical aspect of Restorative Dentistry. I would anticipate that manuscripts for publication may be submitted from these dissertations.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

N/A

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

N/A

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: the design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.</i></p> <p>Details of the assessment and marking criteria were available and are aligned with the intended learning outcomes. Assessment methods were dissertation, literature review, in course assessment and verbal presentation.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses; the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort:</i></p> <p>The students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the aims and intended learning outcomes. This was achieved by in course assessment and literature review followed by submission of their thesis and a viva consisting of a 20 minute presentation and 15 minutes of questioning.</p>		
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y

33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

I was provided with full guidance regarding my role as an external examiner. All of the documentation and dissertations were sent to me in a timely manner prior to the viva date on 21st November. A detailed marking criteria was available on the day of the viva which consisted of a 20 minute presentation followed by 15 minutes of questioning which allowed exploration of further knowledge of the subject area and to assess the level of standard appropriate for a MSc in Restorative Dentistry.

A Pre-Exam Board meeting was held to discuss any mitigating circumstances.

The administrative team and arrangements were excellent throughout the examination process.

The subject areas were appropriate which involved literature reviews and systematic reviews which are most appropriate for a distance learning course. The nature of these review entailed an enormous amount of work and it is apparent that the students had put in a lot of effort.

During one of the vivas, it became apparent that the primary supervisor had had significant input into the dissertation and had provided the student with data to use for a systematic review rather than the students working independently. This was addressed appropriately, the primary supervisor was contacted to clarify the extent of input, and following discussions at the Progression and Awards Board meeting and advice from Examinations Office, the student was required to amend the dissertation and highlight what was group work and the students own independent work. The thesis was then remarked and approved. I was provided with the amended thesis and the Board was reconvened on 12th December. I was invited to attend via teleconference.

I would highlight that this was completed in a sensitive manner and was a fair and transparent process.

Other comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form

I observed 3 students during their vivas. The PowerPoint presentations allowed the students to present their research, provide a background to the work and discuss their findings and any difficulties they encountered. It allowed the examiners to explore the level of knowledge of the students and to ensure they were at the appropriate level expected for MSc in Restorative Dentistry and transparent double marking of the viva was evident. A detailed marking criteria and example questions were also available at the viva and the marking process was clearly explained.

As mentioned before and this is already being addressed for the next year, the viva only accounts for 5% of the module mark which seems rather low considering the amount of effort and time it would take to design the PowerPoint and prepare for the questioning and is being raised to 10%