

**SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINER  
ANNUAL REPORT FORM**



Name	Jo Pickering
Home Institution	University of Derby
Professional/Institutional Affiliation	Head of Postgraduate Studies in Education and Social Science
<i>Has any of the above information changed since your last report? If so, please provide details (including new contact details if appropriate) below:</i> Job role, we have restructured the School of Education and Social Science into 4, from 3 Subject Areas. I was previously Head of Education Studies.	

Subject Area	PGCE FE ITT
Name of Collaborative Partner(s) <i>(if applicable – please include names of all Collaborative Partners)</i>	Chichester College Eastleigh College South Down College
Date of Report	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2011
Academic Year Covered by Report	2010/11

***Before completing this report, please read the paragraph at the end of the report form which gives details of how the information you provide will be used by the University of Portsmouth.***

**Section A: TQI information**

*Information from this section will be available on request to the public through the TQI pages of the University of Portsmouth's website.*

- 1.1 In your view are the standards set for the assessments appropriate for a qualification at this level in this subject? **YES**
- 1.2 Please provide comments:  
Both the assessments set, and the levels achieved are appropriate for the sector.
- 1.3 In your view are the standards of student performance comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar? **YES**
- 1.4 Please provide comments:  
The standard of assessments set and work produced is clearly in line with other similar and equivalent awards in the sector.
- 1.5 Are you satisfied that the processes for assessment and examination are sound and fairly conducted? **YES**
- 1.6 Please provide comments:  
The moderation events are thorough, and allow for extensive staff development, facilitating the sharing of good practice across the partnership.

- 1.7 Where appropriate, please provide a description or bullet point list of any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes that would be worth drawing to the attention of external audiences.
- This is an excellent example of effective partnership working, the team operate cohesively, without any loss of individual contributions or innovations.
  - Standards across the partnership are consistent, and carefully managed.
  - The autobiographical assignment method used is innovative, and an excellent platform for new teachers to consider the impact they potentially have on their learners from a personal perspective.
  - A group presentation introduced this year has encouraged broader and deeper analysis, with a clearer focus on team working and application to practice. It has also encouraged more innovative delivery styles and introduced effective peer appraisal.
  - PGCE FE students are very confident about their ability to cope effectively with behaviour management, they feel well prepared, and that they have learnt the skills to deal well with new and unfamiliar situations.

*Information from this section will be distributed within the University, including committees with student representatives.*

## **B General Information**

- 2.1 Did you attend the Induction Conference this year? **NO**
- 2.2 If you did what do you consider were the strengths/weaknesses of the event?  
N/A
- 2.3 Are you satisfied that previous comments made by you as External Examiner have been addressed? **YES**
- 2.4 If not, please specify:  
N/A

## **C Procedural Checklist**

*[Please delete as appropriate.]*

- 3.1 Did you attend meeting(s) of the Unit Assessment Board this year? **YES**
- 3.2 Did you receive a unit description that included a statement of the learning outcomes, the assessment strategy and the relationship between them for each unit for which you have responsibility? **YES**
- 3.3 Have you been able to moderate a sample of completed assessments across the range of marks for all units? **YES**
- 3.4 Have you received assessment documentation for each unit in the cognate group showing the assessment outcomes and distribution of marks? **YES**
- 3.5 Have you had access to all aspects of unit assessment that you requested? **YES**
- 3.6 Have you had the opportunity to meet with staff responsible for teaching units to discuss assessment, and standards and teaching in the subject? **YES**

*Please give any comments on the above questions, if appropriate:*

Events were well organised, information provided in good time, all requests were met.

3.7 If you met with students this year – please indicate any positive or negative issues raised.

I met with a group of students representing both the full time and part time programmes.

**Full Time cohort (3 student representatives)**

The students all confirmed that it had been a very busy year, and that they had found it stretching. They were confident that the course had prepared them well for their role as teachers in Lifelong Learning. They had developed the skills of reflective practice and this had made them resourceful, resilient and autonomous, although they were clear regarding the need to continue to learn from experienced colleagues and now focus on CPD. The action learning sets they had established during the course would continue to be an important support network as they move into employment.

It was a particular strength that the group felt very confident about the preparation they had had for dealing with behaviour management. This is something we raised as an issue in 2009, and it is commendable that not only did the team address this so quickly, but it has now become a programme strength.

The students raised two areas they would like to see a greater focus on in future years:

- Further preparation for job applications.
- More information on starting programmes, as they join the colleges on placement a few weeks into the academic year.

They were reminded that they had been provided with information on both areas, but Sally (Programme Director) would raise the profile in future cohorts.

In every other regard they were very happy with all aspects of their programme.

**Part Time cohort (5 student representatives, representing the 3 partner colleges)**

This was interesting, Lifelong Learning is a very diverse sector and the students represented different styles, disciplines, and types of teaching. It is sometimes difficult for them to recognise that to be endorsed as an appropriate award it has to demonstrate that a successful candidate is fully prepared for all possible teaching environments. Students therefore often ask why they have to learn about environments they do not currently teach in, despite having this explained by the programme team, it was useful to have it reinforced by an External Examiner.

This addressed many of the queries, one student felt that year one was a little slow, but the second year students felt year two was very hard work, the issue being the increase in level, and the range of personal skills held by a diverse sector. Again, this is an endorsement issue, and it may save the team some time if they reinforce these issues a little more with the students, although it is a sector concern.

One student had met APEL requirements for year one, and felt that she had missed vital elements of the programme as a result, which reinforced the advice she had received from the team initially to complete the full programme, this supports the teams view that APEL should be awarded rarely.

The students all felt that the assignments were well planned and led to measurable improvements in their practice. Much of what they learnt in sessions was directly applicable to practice and led to immediate improvements, for example learning to use ground rules to manage behaviour.

Their concerns were:

- Mentoring was very varied, subject specialist mentors varied from excellent to poor, this is also a sector issue as much support is provided on a good will basis.
- They would like their mentors to be better integrated into the programme and engage more with the University team. This is a constant ambition of the University team, and is difficult to achieve due to time constraints on mentors within the colleges, again a sector issue.
- They did not access the University resources, but used the college resource, this does limit the range of what they can access, and Sally is already working with IT to provide easier access.
- One student commented that he would like to see more Philosophy of Education in the programme, time constraints have reduced this element over the years.

It was disappointing that the Part Time students did not see themselves as University of Portsmouth students, but affiliated mainly with their college provider, and despite the geographical constraints work further consideration.

3.8 Did you receive the information/documentation necessary to enable you to carry out your role effectively? **YES**

3.9 If not – what would you like to have received?  
N/A

#### **D Standards and Assessment**

4.1 Are you satisfied that the unit assessment process was equitable? **YES**

4.2 Please give comments, whether positive or negative:  
This is a key feature of the programme, and the partnership, moderation is comprehensive and effective.

#### **E Written Report – Please feel free to attach this as a separate report**

5.1 Could you please also give us your more detailed views and advice on the operation of assessment and the standard of the units. We would be interested in any views you may have but the following is a list of areas you may wish to consider:-

- **Student Performance** including strengths and weaknesses, quality of knowledge and skills demonstrated, quality and standards of assessments, examination scripts, projects, depth and breadth of subject addressed by students and comparison with students in previous year(s).

The team have made excellent progress on ensuring that only the students who are able to succeed are encouraged to complete at level 7. This has resulted in very secure levels of achievement where students are doing well at both level 6 and 7.

Assignments have been reviewed and are challenging the students to produce work with a higher degree of application to practice, and demonstrating greater analysis of the benefits of theory applied to practice. The group presentation on current issues in education is a good example of this.

- **Marking and Assessment** including appropriateness of assessment in relation to unit outcomes, structure, organisation and design of assessments, consistency thoroughness and standards in marking, administration of assessment by internal markers, distribution of marks between units.

The University team provide clear, progressively challenging and supportive feedback to their students. Marking is consistent in terms of thoroughness/detail and the gradings are accurate.

Specialist subject mentors are variable in the level of feedback they provide to the students. Mostly the standard is good or better, but a few are limited in terms of useful comment, the standard is secure, even with weaker mentors and the overall assessment matches those of the University tutors.

- **Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum** including the appropriateness of the learning outcomes of the units to their educational aims, the expectations of students and/or the requirements of professional bodies, any lessons to be drawn from the assessments in relation to the quality of the curriculum, syllabus or teaching methods and resources.

The refinements the team have made to the programme over the last 2 years have ensured that the content, delivery, methods and approaches have continued to refresh, update and improve the provision. They are a self critical team who continue to review the course and work hard to retain their sector knowledge and currency to ensure the course remains fit for purpose. This is aided by the inclusion of two sessional lecturers who are also current practitioners in the sector, and the close nature of the partnership.

The Part Time students do need to recognise the requirements of the endorsing body on the nature of their programme and limits placed on the University as a result.

This is a sound programme, with some excellent features led by an effective and dedicated team.

### **Use of External Examiner reports**

The comments you make in your report will be circulated within the University and will be discussed at committee meetings, some of which will include student representatives.

Information from Section A of the report will be made publicly available via the TQI section of the University's website. The remaining sections of the report (Sections B, C and D, along with any written comments) will be made available within the University, as described above, and may be made available outside the University if requested (for example through a TQI request or under the Freedom of Information Act).

Please do not mention individual students by name or student number in this report. Should you wish to discuss an individual student case then this should be done in a separate statement and clearly marked 'Confidential, for the attention of University officers and the Board of Examiners only'.

If you have any concerns about this, please contact Cathryn Palmer at [cathryn.palmer@port.ac.uk](mailto:cathryn.palmer@port.ac.uk) in the first instance.

### **FINALISING AND SENDING YOUR REPORT**

Please send your completed report, by email, to [examiners.reports@port.ac.uk](mailto:examiners.reports@port.ac.uk). There is no need to send an additional hard copy through the post.

Your report will be copied to the Head of Department and Associate Dean (Academic) for the relevant Faculty in the first instance. It may also be considered more widely in the University as described above.

If your report relates to programmes offered through collaborative partnerships, your report will also be made available to the partner institution.

The process for the consideration of your annual report is set out in the document 'External Examiners – Regulations and Procedures'.

### **FOR ACADEMIC REGISTRY USE ONLY:**

Date received in Registry:

Date circulated to Faculty/Department: