External Examiner’s Report Form

The main form will not be published but will be used by the University (and where relevant, its partner college) for specified internal purposes, including being shared with student representatives. Reports may be subject to release under specified Freedom of Information requests.

ALL EXAMINERS – Please use tab key to move from field to field.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name: Kerry Jordan-Daus</th>
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<td>Your institution or Professional Association: Canterbury Christ Church University</td>
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<td>Programme(s)/Course(s): ITE PGCE and School Direct</td>
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<td>Where applicable, Partner Institution examined: N/A</td>
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<td>Exam Board: Initial Teacher Education</td>
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<td>Academic Year: 2015-16 Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☒</td>
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REPORT SUBMISSION

Please submit your completed form electronically to the CORRECT address as follows:

For programmes delivered at the UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX: externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk

For programmes delivered at a PARTNER COLLEGE or INSTITUTION: partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk

University reports should be submitted no later than:

- Undergraduate provision: last day of August
- Centre for Continuing Education: last day of October
- Postgraduate provision: 6 weeks after the end of year examination board
- Partner programmes: 6 weeks after the end of year examination board

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Validated programmes Undergraduate Postgraduate

PVC PVC PVC
Partnership Office Director of Undergraduate Studies Director of Graduate Studies
Principal of partner college Head of department or Director of interdisciplinary group Head of department or Director of interdisciplinary group
Named contact responsible for quality assurance at the partner college Chair of the subject examination board Chair of the subject examination board
School Administrator (Curriculum) School Administrators (Curriculum)
1 Please comment on whether the standards set by the University are, in your view, appropriate for the qualification being studied.

Please relate your comments to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, programme specifications and other relevant information as appropriate

The arrangements for my visits as external examiner provided a full range of evidence to evaluate the provision of Initial Teacher Education. Owing to circumstances (illness and interview), I was able to observe one student teaching this year and I had less opportunity to speak with individual students owing to observing the RPK interviews. The opportunity to see these interviews was invaluable. There is only so much one can include in a visit!

This was my final visit as an external examiner, and in reflecting on the changes over this four year period, I will use this opportunity to make some general comments upon the developments I have witnessed. It has been a time of marked changes in ITE. During this period some providers have struggled to develop a coherent and viable provision. Sussex has grown its numbers. Its partnership has gone from strength to strength. This is a real strength and could only have been achieved because of the high quality of the partnership and the energy and enthusiasm of the Sussex Team to make things work.

During the course of my visit in May, I met with a School ITE lead, Subject Mentors and students who were following School Direct Salary (Secondary), School Direct Non-Salary (Secondary) and those on the University based course leading to the award of PGCE (Secondary). I also scrutinised students’ written assignments, observed the RPK interviews, and examined the portfolio evidence of professional learning.

The school visit enabled me to talk at length with a very experienced School Based Professional Tutor, who gave very generously of her time. I had met with her in one of my previous visits and it was useful to evaluate the overall direction of changes in ITE and its impact on teacher recruitment.

Programme Structure
As referenced in my report last year, a significant development for 2015-16 was the changes in the placement structure for all trainees on all pathways. This change, as reported to me by the School Based Professional Tutor, had been fully discussed at the partnership forum during the period 2014-15, leading to its implementation in 2015-16. There was a full acknowledgement that "as always" Sussex discussed this fully with their partners. Whilst there were inevitably those who "opposed" the change, it was the subject of extensive consultation.

Following the "year long" trial of the new placement structure, it has been deemed not to be "appropriate" for all pathways and thus there will be a return to the former structure. However, the reason for my focus on this "episode" is to illustrate the following. 1) the ITE Programme at Sussex is constantly evolving 2) partners are fully included in programme developments 3) all developments are fully evaluated AND if they are not working, the partnership is "confident" to say!

This approach exemplifies best practice in organisations which are able to embrace and manage change in a creative and confident way!

Assessment
Again, further to our request in the External Examiners Final Reports, we were able to observe the RPK Interviews in person (last year we observed the "video recordings").
Thank you for putting these arrangements in place. This provided a rich opportunity to see the "total" journey of a Sussex ITE student. I was able to observe three, each with a different tutor. I really enjoyed the opportunity to share my thoughts on this highly innovative strand of the oral assessment/viva process. I observed two very strong interviews and one very weak.

The strong students demonstrated depth of knowledge, which could only have been secured by hours of preparation for the interview. They were able to demonstrate through their portfolio evidence of meeting all the assessment requirements and the ability to speak in detail about chosen areas. As is always the case, the balance between presentation and discussion is difficult. Overall, I would have like to have seen more discussion and consideration given to a more dialogic format (see Alexander R. 2008).

I was able to engage in detailed discussion with colleagues about these thoughts and know already some of these observations have been used to inform evaluations for the ongoing development of this dimension of assessment.

It was explained that following a review of the weaker student, it was deemed that he had met the assessment criteria.

For all assessments, two tutors were involved; in two of those observed this was a school mentor/colleague and in the other, an Associate Fellow. This provided an excellent training and development opportunity. Moving forward, it might be considered how this person could have an agreed role or participate more in the assessment process.

2 Please comment on the appropriateness of the published assessment criteria.

From the assignments I reviewed, once again, I would assert that they have a strong theoretical underpinning but ensure that the theory is related to practice and used to inform practice. I saw a full
range of assignments, with marks ranging from 51 to 77. Given the clear strength of some of this work, I wonder whether the Sussex team would consider a short annual publication of the "best" student work. There are clearly scripts worthy of wider dissemination.

The use of "Turn-it-in" enables greater transparency for the team to ensure that there is both consistency in grading but also in terms of the formative feedback given to students. This was something I highlighted last year in terms of comments. From the sample I looked at this year, this was not so evident. However, there could still be thought given to how we model assessment for learning in tutors' comments.

3 Please comment on whether you believe standards of student performance and achievement are comparable to those of similar programmes in other higher education institutions?

I conducted a joint observation with SBT. The group being taught presented a high level of learning needs and there was very secure evidence that the trainee had built a good relationship with the pupils. This was essential to build trust and mutual respect, not an easy task for a trainee teacher on a placement. It was a difficult lesson to manage as some of the pupils had missed the previous lesson in the sequence and thus the pupils were at very different places in their learning. The trainee had sought to take this on board in her planning.

Both the SBT and I agreed that the trainee needed to give greater attention to meeting the needs of an EAL pupil. There was agreement on the strengths of lessons and the areas for development. The SBT raised challenging and thoughtful development points in the post lesson evaluation. Targets for development were agreed. These were purposeful and would support ongoing professional development.

It was useful to discuss with both the SBT and Professional Tutor, the school's approach to ITE. In any one year they would expect to have between 10-15 trainee teachers, working with two or three different providers. The school has a rigorous and embedded approach to its work in ITE. This year, 2015-16, had seen many challenges, including with its own School Direct trainees. All mentors undergo training and development, whilst a "voluntary" role, all mentors are committed to this dimension of their work. There had been a number of difficulties this year with students which had placed additional pressure on the mentors.

The quality, commitment and capacity of SBT/mentoring is essential to ITE and I know that the partnership will continue to look at innovative ways to reward, develop and challenge mentors in their work.
4. Please comment on whether you believe existing assessment processes enable students to demonstrate achievement of the intended **learning outcomes**.

There is very strong evidence of tracking of trainee progress and use of progress data to inform targeted support. To support External Examiners, it would be helpful to have a short pen portrait of the students being visited.

5. On the basis of the work you have examined, please comment on the appropriateness of **marks awarded to individual students** and/or the appropriateness of their **final award** (for reasons of confidentiality and data protection individual students should not be named).

From the work that I have examined, discussions with students and their trainers, I would fully support that appropriate marks have been awarded to individuals.

Processes ensure triangulation of assessment between the various stakeholders involved in the training year.

There is a very transparent process with all stakeholders sharing high quality and mutually respectful professional relationships. From my discussion with the School Based Professional Tutor, I was once again reminded that the strength of the partnership "makes Sussex stand out".
6 Please indicate whether you are satisfied that processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards have been sound, appropriate and fairly conducted.

I found the process for assessment, examination and determination of awards to be of a very high and rigorous standard.

7 Do you have any comments on resources as impact on student performance in assessment processes?

All students reported high quality support on their training programmes. Students talked about the demanding nature of their ITE. This was specifically highlighted by a mature student who had previously been in the Armed Services. He commented on the huge personal challenges he’d faced, even though he had spent time in the school in a learning support role before beginning his ITE. The level of resilience required, the need to manage a multiplicity of demands, cannot be overstated. Once again, we are reminded of the need to have in place quality of mentoring which really supports trainee learning. But we are also reminded that mentors themselves are facing a multiplicity of demands on their time.
8 Please comment on the aims, content and development of the curriculum.

This is a “time” of (too) many changes and the Partnership will need to keep their watchful eye on the core provision to ensure that trainees are fully supported and prepared, not just to know about the “latest” development, but also to understand this. Changes to GCSE and Assessment Measures (eg Progress 8) will need to be explored. The strength of the “partnership” and the embeddness of school based learning will help to ensure that this is in place, but will require strong and purposeful leadership.

9 Please comment on the quality of teaching and learning methods.

Students I met commented on the high quality training inputs in their University training days. Given the range of different pathways, it was interesting to hear how the students had been guided to follow a route which met their individual needs. Overall, they felt that the pathways were differentiated appropriately to acknowledge the starting points of different students. Some are coming into ITE having worked in schools as Teaching Assistants for substantial periods and their needs are different to those who are coming directly from an Undergraduate Degree.

10 Have you had sufficient access to and the power to call upon any materials needed to make the required judgements?

I was provided with full access to all materials needed to make the required judgements. Although, it
could not be helped, during my first visit, I was not able to see as many students as I have in previous years.

11 Are there any other issues on which you wish to comment?

Once again, I wish to extend my thanks to the partnership for facilitating my visit. During my time as external examiner, I have observed the provision at Sussex undergo some very significant developments. This year (2015-16) has additionally seen changes in the Sussex University ITE Leadership Team. The strength of the “team” cannot be overstated. I wish everyone the very best as they move forward. It really has been a priviledge to work with you all and I will miss my annual visit to the South Coast.

During my time as External Examiner have seen the highly regarded Graduate Teacher Programme become fully merged with the University led PGCE. The advent of School Direct has presented challenges and opportunities, but the significant development, in my opinion, is that now “all” trainees at Sussex (regardless of pathway) get a comparable high quality training. Students are now fully integrated and their needs are met through an appropriately differentiated and personalised training programme.

The partnership has been able to navigate imposed external change agendas and stay true to their core beliefs and values. Trainees completing their initial teacher education through the Sussex University partnership are well equipped to both understand and critique education policy and practice. They are emersed in a culture of reflective practice which has children and young people's deep learning and development at its core.

12 Conclusions and recommendations

(a) Good practice

- Highly committed and very strong ITE Partnership

- An outstanding ITE Team

- Commitment to innovation and development

- Evidence of engaging the partnership in review and getting "ownership" of changes to provision to support enhancement to the learning

- Synergy between all routes and parity of high quality of learning.
- Appropriately differentiated training to take account of different stating points

(b) Areas requiring attention

(i) Essential

  Not applicable.

(ii) Advisable

  - Provide External Examiners with a profile of students being visited/observed
  - Development of a "dialogue of learning" embedded in RPK assessment
  - Look to share (through publication?) students' outstanding research/assignments
  - Ongoing review of curriculum to ensure "new" developments (eg Progress 8) are fully embedded

Name: Kerry Jordan-Daus  
Date: 18th August 2016  
e-mail address (for acknowledgement)  kerry.jordan-daus@canterbury.ac.uk