UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

External Examiner's Report Form

The University intends to publish the full report (or extract of) to the public, prospective and current students.

Please use tab key to move from field to field.

Name: Terry Haydn

Your institution or Professional Association: University of East Anglia

Course title(s) (full course name): Secondary Initial Teacher Education

Where applicable, Partner Institution examined:

Progression and Award Board:

Academic Year: 2015/16   Undergraduate   Postgraduate   x

REPORT SUBMISSION

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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, course specifications and other relevant information as appropriate

   Yes. I have examined at several other institutions over the past few years, including some that have received very good Ofsted/HMI grades, and the course seems to me to be in line with the standards I have seen at these institutions (it is my first year as an examiner here).

2 Please comment on the appropriateness of the published **marking criteria.**

   This is one of the strengths of the course. I thought that these were helpful, appropriate and transparent.

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

   Yes.

4 Please comment on whether you believe existing assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended course and module **learning outcomes**.

   Again, one of the strengths of the course.

5 On the basis of the sample of assessments that you have reviewed, please comment on the appropriateness of the application of the marking and moderation processes as evidenced by the annotated scripts and **marks and feedback given.** *(For reasons of confidentiality and data protection individual students should not be named).*

   The system appears to be very effective and appropriate. The online availability of assessments for scrutiny and moderation is very helpful and efficient.

6 Please indicate whether you are satisfied that the **processes** for assessment, examination and the determination of awards have been **sound, appropriate and fairly conducted.**

Yes. I thought that it was very helpful to have colleagues from partnership schools involved in the assessment of the final assignment, and am aware that this must add to administrative burdens and time involved in the assessment of assignments. But given the nature of the final assignment, I think it is really good to have two people involved in making judgements.

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

The students I spoke to seemed to be pleased and satisfied with the quality of resources available to them, there were no grumbles or complaints in this area.

8 Please comment on any good practice that you have observed related to **teaching, learning and assessment**.

I was struck by the very positive comments of students when they were invited to comment on the quality of school placements, both for themselves and for their peers. I got the impression that the overwhelming majority of students felt that they had gone to schools where they were well looked after and supported. Of course, it is always important to have good 'intelligence' about the quality of student experience and support in schools, but this intelligence seemed to be in place and working well. Inevitably, this fell short of 100% approbation for placement quality, with there appearing to be a (very) small number of students who had reservations about their placements, but it is of course difficult for an external visiting for 2 days to fully ascertain whether the reservations about placement quality were related to weaknesses in school support, or whether they arose out of student weaknesses being pointed out, with consequent resentment on the part of students.

I was very impressed with the nature and format of the final assignment. I saw some very impressive presentations and portfolios, but I was aware that there were others that were not a strong, and it seemed to me that the nature of the assignment was helpful to student progression, and a good discriminator of students' abilities and application. It was challenging in the best sense of the word.

Another strength of the course would appear to be the quality of the curriculum sessions, which were thought to be relevant, useful and high quality by the students I talked to (I asked them to respond bearing in mind the views of their peers as well as their own views). I found it interesting that all the students I talked to felt that they were well prepared to teach A level – this is not always the case in my experience.

The Professional Studies course was generally well regarded, with most sessions seen as being good and useful (you are probably already aware of which sessions get rave reviews). This degree of satisfaction with the Professional Studies component of the course is unusual in my experience. It is worth noting that all the behaviour management inputs received very positive feedback, and I would advise retaining all these inputs next year if this is possible.

As noted above, I thought that the online availability and processing of the assignments appeared to be very helpful and efficient.

On final point, the students felt that all the assignments were relevant to their practice and progression as teachers. Although (perhaps inevitably) there were some minor caveats about the timing of assignments, I did not encounter any students who thought the assignments a waste of their time.

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

It is my first year as examiner and I am aware that I only talked directly to one group of students on the course, plus the students whose lessons I observed, but the impression I got from these discussions, and from the quality of the student files that I saw, and the quality of the assignment work, was that the students get a very healthy and broad range of exposure to a range of teaching approaches, and see good practice modelled both at the university and in schools.

10   Have you had **sufficient access to and the power** to call upon any materials needed to make the required judgements? If not, please give details.

Yes.

11   Are there any **other issues** on which you wish to comment? Please consider if issues raised in previous reports have been addressed satisfactorily and/or if you are required to comment on any issues related to a PSB.

No.
n/a

12   Conclusions and recommendations

(a)   Good practice and innovation.

In terms of innovation, I thought that the design of the final assignment was an excellent example of good and innovative practice in the area of assessment, and the system of administering the assessment process electronically appeared to work well and to be a good example of using new technology to improve whole course systems and processes (unless there were glitches and teething problems that I am unaware of).

All the whole course inputs on behaviour management in the Professional Studies component of the course evinced very positive comments from students, this topic seemed to well catered for in the Professional Studies part of the course.

For other examples of good practice, see section 8.

(b)	Areas requiring attention

(i)	Essential

(ii)	Advisable

   I mention this tentatively as I am new to the course and did not talk to large numbers of students. Your in-house evaluation may show that this tentative suggestion is inapposite and redundant, but I suggest that the issue should at least be discussed by the course team. I did not feel sure/confident that students in all subjects had gained a very broad and rich understanding of how new technologies might improve teaching and learning in their subject. Might it be possible that this strand of 'training' is stronger in some subjects than others? There is generally some variation in the extent to which placement schools cover this facet of becoming an effective teacher, and it is therefore helpful if the university component of the course can try to ensure that students get good input, advice and experience in this area. University tutors sometimes very in the extent to which they are 'expert' in the use of new technology, but it is usually possible to use expertise within the partnership to ensure that all students receive a sound 'grounding; in ICT.

The other areas of the Teachers' Standards which I feel might be worth discussion are in managing pupil behaviour, and assessment. This is not to imply any weakness in current provision, I just feel that they are very challenging issues for all ITE courses at the moment. The Bennett Review of behaviour content in ITE, although not mandatory, suggest some things that might be quite difficult to deliver in a straightforward way (for example 'digital portfolios on behaviour, teaching experience over the summer break prior to the course). The question of how to respond intelligently to the Bennett Review (and the review on course content and mentoring standards), will need to be at least discussed and considered. The current arrangements for assessment in schools after the decision to 'end' the levels system also poses challenges for ITE courses given the massive differences between schools in terms of assessment policy and practice. One possible way forward is to focus on the question of what constitutes good practice in assessment, and to provide a range of examples of possible approaches. I mention this partly because our students at UEA found this a difficult issue this year (plus the complexities and challenges of gaining a secure grounding in the use of data within the PGCE year).

(c) Conclusion of tenure. (Please append an overview of your term of office if this is your final report)

n/a

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