

External Examiner's Report Form

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

Name: Georgina Newton
Your institution or Professional Association: University of Warwick
Course title(s) (full course name) PGCE
Where applicable, Partner Institution examined: University of Sussex
Progression and Award Board: 16 th June 2017
Academic Year: 2017 Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REPORT SUBMISSION

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

For courses delivered at the UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX: externalexaminers@sussex.ac.uk

For courses delivered at a PARTNER INSTITUTION: partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk

University reports should be submitted no later than:

Undergraduate provision:	last day of August
Postgraduate provision:	6 weeks after the Progression and Award Board
Partner courses:	6 weeks after the end of year examination board

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Validated courses

Undergraduate and Postgraduate

PVC
Link Tutor
Head of partner institution
Named contact responsible for quality assurance
at the partner institution

PVC
Head of School
Director of Teaching and Learning or
Board of Study
Chair of the Module Assessment Board
Chair of the Progression and Award Board
School Curriculum and Assessment Officer

- 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

The portfolios submitted for RPK in relation to evidence of the Teachers' Standards are appropriate for assessment without being too onerous for the students. This is important in view of the national workload monitoring strategy and it is commendable that the University is taking steps to minimise unnecessary work. From my observation of students' work and training in schools and their University assessments, I can confirm that I believe the standards being set to be wholly appropriate for the qualification being studied.

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

Whilst the Partnership handbook contains generic standards for the assessment of Master's level work on pages 68 and 69 it has not been possible to gain access to any more detailed marking criteria for the modules I have assessed. Is it possible for this to be arranged within the electronic assessment package used for submissions, assessments and feedback?

I consider the published assessment criteria for the award of QTS to be wholly appropriate.

- 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**?

The standards of attainment of students at the University of Sussex are broadly in line with those at my institution, with a range achieving high, middle and lower marks.

During this year period of External Examination I was able to observe four students teaching and to hear the feedback from their tutors, which allowed me to ensure the accuracy of judgements against the QTS standards. The students I observed represented a range of ability and outcomes, and one had had some difficulties during the course and was able to demonstrate how the University and school had worked together to help her to achieve a successful outcome.

The moderation and benchmarking techniques used by the university allow for identification of inconsistencies between school and university assessors with regard to lesson observations aiming to address imbalance where it occurs and this demonstrates a confident and highly effective model of partnership.

The evidence submitted for the award of QTS via the Mahara portfolio is in line with the requirements of other Higher Education Institutions.

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

The use of the Qualified Teacher Standards as an assessment tool for the learning outcomes of the course is highly appropriate. These are measured both in practice at the school and through the presentation of an RPK and viva at the University. This represents a fair and manageable approach which is not unduly burdensome for the students.

It also allows for the identification of student teachers who are achieving at high, middle and low pass rates and regular feedback is provided to the students against these criteria.

The University has a tracking mechanism which students mostly make regular use of and this allows staff to identify areas of underperformance and track progress over the duration 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 RPK assessments reviewed present a wide range of marks and feedback reflects clear engagement with the work, both by the marker and the moderator. Feedback is proportionate and appropriate.

Both of the undergraduate modules viewed are also appropriately assessed and annotated.

- 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**.

Assessment of QTS has been sound, fair and appropriate in my view. This is based upon classroom observations, paired assessment feedback meetings, reviews of the RPK and final results being submitted to the PAB. Student portfolios have also been seen and scrutinised, and these support the assessment outcomes given in every case.

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

Within the PGCE the use of online form submission for students to register their weekly performance, achievements, targets and concerns with staff is innovative and effective, where used. Some tutors follow this up assiduously but there is evidence that some subject tutors are less prone to regular monitoring of these data. This may lead to inconsistency in experience for the students.

It is unclear whether this imbalance is due to the tutor's lack of familiarity with the software or their lack of rigour in assessment tracking. Similarly, it could be that some other tutors are unduly conscientious in this area. Expectations in this regard were not investigated but would form the basis for interesting discussion on future visits.

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

Students all commented that their tutors were highly skilled and had provided them with a good learning experience. There are cases of extremely good subject mentoring and guidance in schools which lead to excellent results for the student teachers.

Some instances of “flipped” learning are well used at times, though this is not embedded. In some cases learning was significantly enhanced by the use of a scrapbook, which detailed the student’s self-guided enhancement of specific subject expertise. Though this was optional, a high percentage of the students in the sample group had done it and they spoke favourably of the way in which this had developed their learning. Those who hadn’t done it said it would have been a source of stress to them to have to do it and preferred to document their subject knowledge development in their paper portfolio.

Assessments of RPK provide accurate feedback on achievement and outlines areas for development/action where appropriate.

9 Please comment on the quality of **teaching and learning methods and learning opportunities** (based on the standard set of materials sent, not observation of teaching or access to teaching resources).

The tasks set in Mahara are easily accessible and provide student teachers with a strong learning opportunity as they reflect on critical incidents in significant areas of their practice. This is largely well done, with some students demonstrating an emerging ability to critique their own practice in the light of relevant and recent literature.

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.

It has been very interesting to visit schools and conduct visits. Focus groups with students and meetings with staff were also very beneficial. It was particularly interesting to meet one of the students I had observed on placement in one of the focus meetings at the University. This allowed me to follow her progress from final placement to final outcome. I was pleased to be able to meet quite a range of students, both in school meetings and the University focus groups. Access to a sample of RPK portfolios has also been sufficient to make the required judgement. Using my knowledge of the marking criteria used nationwide, I was able to compare with other institutions, though access to the marking criteria used by assessors (if this is more detailed than what is published in the Partnership handbook on pages 68 and 69) would be of benefit.

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.

I note that in last year’s report it was stated that a brief pen portrait of students being visited would be helpful. I also, would have found that useful this year.

I look forward to being able to build on these findings in future visits.

12 Conclusions and recommendations

(a) Good practice and innovation.

The use of online forms for students to submit weekly achievements, targets and concerns.
 The way in which some tutors use the above to inform their support of the students.
 The use of former tutors as link practitioners, visiting schools and ensuring that professional learning programmes are in place in all placements.
 The mentoring and development strategies used by some school mentors
 The way in which in-school training is designed to complement that which takes place at the university.
 Use of encouraging language in relation to attainment of the teaching standards at every stage of the course. This helps students to see that, even in the early stages of their learning, they are on the road to achieving well and helps their self-esteem.
 Responsiveness to needs highlighted in the completion of the weekly tracker is admirable. It is clear that tutors care.

(b) Areas requiring attention

Inconsistency of experience of students in different subject areas in respect of tracking and support.
 Some students receive timely support if they flag a problem in their weekly tracker. Others are not routinely asked to complete the tracker so any concerns are left unaddressed unless the student is moved to email the tutor direct. Completion of the tracker builds relationship and allows issues to be nipped in the bud.

(i) Essential

Incidences of inconsistency between the data returned by a placement school and the outcomes of assessments at the University such as the RPK.
 Clear and robust assessment processes should ensure borderline cases are considered individually when graded as 1,2 or 3 on receipt of QTS.

(ii) Advisable

Agree as a team how often the tracker data should be reviewed and strategies to ensure its regular completion.
 Provide a pen portrait for External Examiners to summarise a student's performance.
 If more detailed marking criteria for Master's modules exist, make them available to the External Examiner so that it is possible to see how a particular mark has been arrived at.

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

Name Georgina Newton

Date: 11th July 2017

e-mail address (for acknowledgement) g.c.newton@warwick.ac.uk

Appendix 1

Statement of Compliance (provided at the Progression and Award Board)

External Examiners are asked to complete this checklist stating whether or not the relevant examination and assessment procedures and policies have been adhered to in a satisfactory manner. External Examiners are reminded that a report must be completed in addition to completing this statement of compliance and that the report will be made available to students. The statement of compliance is for internal use only.

Course materials

Did you receive:

a)	Course handbook(s)?	Yes / No
b)	Exam and assessment regulations?	Yes / No
c)	Module descriptions (these may be in the course handbook)?	Yes / No
d)	Assessment schedule/marketing criteria?	Yes / No

Draft examination papers

a)	Did you receive all the draft papers?	Yes / No
	If not, was this at your request?	Yes / No
b)	Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?	Yes / No
	If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Yes / No

Marking examination scripts

a)	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?	Yes / No
	If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?	Yes / No
b)	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Yes / No
c)	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Yes / No

Dissertations/project reports

a)	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations/projects appropriate?	Yes / No
b)	Was the mode and standard of assessment appropriate?	Yes / No

Coursework/continuously assessed work

a)	Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?	Yes / No
b)	Was the mode and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	Yes / No

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

a)	Were suitable arrangements made for you to moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?	Yes / No
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Meeting to consider Classification (Undergraduate Progression and Award Board)

a)	Were you able to attend the meeting?	Yes / No
b)	Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?	Yes / No
c)	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Award Board?	Yes / No

Signed ...Georgina Newton Date11th July 2017.....

Name (please print)Georgina Newton.....

Note: if you have answered 'No' to any of the questions above, please include comments (as appropriate) in your written report