

**Academic Strategy and Practice
at Edinburgh Napier**

External Examiner Reports

2013/14

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

All External Examiners are requested to fill in a report upon completion of their duties associated with **first diet assessments** each session. Please note that all sections of the report must be completed for payment to be authorised.

Your report will be given primary consideration at subject level and will inform annual monitoring. The University Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Review Committee will also receive a summary report of general themes from the reports submitted in each academic year.

You are reminded that you must not name individual students or staff members in your report, and you should be aware that an anonymised version of this report will be published on the University's Academic Quality website.

The deadlines for submission of reports for session 2013/14 are

- 07 July 2014 for duties relating to undergraduate provision
- 27 October 2014 for duties relating to taught masters provision

If you have any questions or problems completing this form please contact externalexaminers@napier.ac.uk

Duties

Is this report for:	mark as appropriate
Programmes and Modules	X
Modules only	

Please insert module titles and numbers to which this report refers
(This information was sent to you on your appointment, if you require this information to be re-sent, please request this at externalexaminers@napier.ac.uk):

EDU11100, Introduction to Blended and Online Education
 EDU11108, Curriculum Design and Development for Blended and Online Learning
 EDU11117, Customised Study for Blended and Online Education
 EDU11111, Supporting the Blended and Online Student Experience
 EDU11112, Educational Research Methods and Practice
 EDU11150, Applied Practice in Blended and Online Teaching

Please insert the programme title(s) to which this report refers (if appropriate):

MSc Blended and Online Education

Section B:

In accordance with Edinburgh Napier University regulations A9.4a-d, please confirm the following:

	Yes	No
<p>Academic Issues Is the academic standard of each module or programme of study being considered set and maintained at the appropriate level?</p>	√	
<p>Student Performance Are the standards of student performance properly judged against the level set?</p>	√	
<p>Assessment Is the assessment process appropriate, rigorous, equitable and conducted in accordance with University guidance?</p>	√	
<p>Comparable Standards Is the standard and level of student achievement comparable with those in other higher education institutions?</p>	√	

Section C:

1) Comparability

Please comment on the comparability of standards of student work between modules within a course (if appropriate) and those in other higher education institutions you may be familiar with.

I am satisfied that the standards of student work are consistent across modules within this programme, demonstrating a reasonable spread across abilities and grades which is commensurate with taught postgraduate study. I can also confirm that the standards and quality of student work are consistent with similar programmes at masters level with which I am familiar in other universities

2) Commentary on Academic issues

Is the academic standard of each module or programme of study being considered set and maintained at the appropriate level, meeting the threshold academic standards, and where applicable, the [subject benchmark statements](#) and [SCQF level](#) descriptors

It is clear that the module tutors work closely together as a team to ensure that academic standards in modules are appropriately set and consistently maintained. This has been particularly noticeable during the recent handover to a new programme leader when a few revisions have been proposed to enhance the learning activities.

Learning outcomes for the modules are clear and appropriate for the subject area, as are the grading criteria. All are in line with relevant subject benchmark statements and SCQF level descriptors.

3) Student Performance

Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the student performance with respect to module and/or programme content

As is normal in taught postgraduate programmes, student performance in the work I have sampled over the last year has varied from borderline pass to high quality work of near publishable quality. Overall the assignments have been of a generally good standard and there are no areas of concern. I have been impressed by the well-structured student submissions which meet the overall criteria for the assignments at masters level. It is good to see strong links being made between theory and practice in most of the student work, although some would have benefitted from reference to a wider range of current literature beyond the recommended course texts. This is perhaps unsurprising as mature PG students are often 'time-poor' and take a pragmatic approach, however they should continue to be encouraged to engage with the wider literature as part of their own ongoing development as innovative educators.

4) Learning and Teaching

Please comment on the effectiveness of the Learning and Teaching methods employed on the modules and/or programmes

The modules in this online programme have been designed to allow the students to experience for themselves a range of technology enhanced learning and teaching approaches. These include an interesting variety of learning activities and resources which are very effective in encouraging student engagement both as individuals and in groups. It is clear from the students' work that they benefit from sharing experiences with peers from different educational contexts as well as with their tutors. The thoughtful design of the assignments can be tailored by the students to their own context, which ensures they are meaningful and effective. The programme as a whole incorporates an excellent balance of practical skills and theoretical concepts.

5) Assessment

Please comment on the fairness and the rigour of the assessment and feedback process employed on the modules and/or programmes

The assessment and feedback process embodies fairness and rigour throughout. The students have clearly benefitted from the comprehensive instructions and rubrics provided by the tutors, resulting in well-structured submissions which meet the set criteria. In particular, I would commend the tutor feedback which has been exceptionally supportive and constructive across all the work I sampled during the year.

6) Good practice

Please comment on any areas of good practice that you wish to highlight

It was really interesting to see the creative ways in which students were encouraged to demonstrate their understanding of both theory and practice in their assignments through a variety of methods, including animations, blogs, padlet, podcasts and infographics. This demonstrates the high level of engagement by students in the programme which in turn reflects the commendable commitment of the programme team.

7) Recommendations

Please specify any recommendations that you wish to make.

I would encourage the programme team to continue to support the students in deepening their critical engagement with the current literature.

I mentioned ethics in my previous report as an area for development, and while there is evidence that some of the students are now addressing this in their action research, it would be helpful to see more widespread awareness of ethical considerations.

Section D:

This checklist is included to take into account the recommendation from the review of external examining arrangements in universities in the UK undertaken by Guild HE and Universities UK. We welcome any comments you have about this section.

Yes	No	NA
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Programme and Module materials: have you received or been given access to:

- a. Programme Handbook(s)
- b. Academic Regulations
- c. Module Descriptors
- d. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria

√		
√		
√		
√		

Draft Examination Papers

- a. Did you receive all the draft papers (answer 'NA' if you did not because it was at your request)
- b. Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?
- c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

		N/A
		N/A
		N/A

Marking Coursework/ Examination Scripts

- a. Did you receive as a minimum a square root sample of completed scripts or coursework? (as specified in regulation A9.4)
- b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?
- c. Were the scripts and coursework marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?

√		
√		
√		

Dissertations/Project reports

- a. Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

√		
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Board of Examiners meeting

- a. Were you able to attend the meeting? (*attended February & June Boards, not September board.*)
- b. If you were unable to attend the meeting were you offered the opportunity to provide views on student performance, progression and awards?
- c. Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?
- d. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?
- e. Were issues raised in previous report(s) addressed to your satisfaction?

√		
√		
√		
√		
√		

Any other comments?

Please use this space to address any other comments you wish to make, including but not limited to

- a) any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body
- b) an overview of your term of office (when concluded).

Thank you for completing this report and for undertaking External Examiner duties at Edinburgh Napier University.

Please email the completed report to externalexaminers@napier.ac.uk

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Duties

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Programmes and Modules	x
Modules only	

Please insert module titles and numbers to which this report refers
(This information was sent to you on your appointment, if you require this information to be re-sent, please request this at externalexaminers@napier.ac.uk):

EDU11101 Professional Study and Practices
EDU11105 Effective Learning and Teaching in HE Contexts
EDU11104 Assessment and Evaluation
NMS11101
NMS11105

Please insert the programme title(s) to which this report refers (if appropriate):

Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
Edinburgh Napier Mentoring and Coaching Award

Section B:

In accordance with Edinburgh Napier University regulations A9.4a-d, please confirm the following:

	Yes	No
Academic Issues Is the academic standard of each module or programme of study being considered set and maintained at the appropriate level?	X	
Student Performance Are the standards of student performance properly judged against the level set?	X	
Assessment Is the assessment process appropriate, rigorous, equitable and conducted in accordance with University guidance?	X	

Comparable Standards Is the standard and level of student achievement comparable with those in other higher education institutions?	X	
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Section C:

1) Comparability

Please comment on the comparability of standards of student work between modules within a course (if appropriate) and those in other higher education institutions you may be familiar with.

PG Cert T and L

The standard of work is certainly comparable (and in some instances higher) than those that I am familiar with in other higher education institutions. The rigorous first and second marking across modules ensures comparability of standards between modules within the overall course.

ENMCA

This is the third run of the course. The course is very well established and although there is no formal qualifications framework standard (SCQF) set for the award (as it is accredited by SEDA not Edinburgh Napier University) the work is definitely comparable to similar courses I am familiar with.

2) Commentary on Academic issues

Is the academic standard of each module or programme of study being considered set and maintained at the appropriate level, meeting the threshold academic standards, and where applicable, the [subject benchmark statements](#) and [SCQF level](#) descriptors

PG T and L

The standard of each module and that of the overall programme is certainly set and maintained at the appropriate level. Although there are no subject benchmark statements at M level for T and L in HE awards the programme overall does conform to other standards as laid down for the educational sector. In addition, the programme has been accredited by both SEDA and the Higher Education Academy (external professional bodies) so has additional external confirmation of the standards. Programme participants are required to map their achievements to the UK Professional Standards Framework. The programme certainly meets M level descriptors.

ENMCA

Although the programme does not formally fit the SCQF levels the academic standard is right for the HE sector. The programme has been accredited by SEDA so it has external recognition by a national professional body. The outcomes of the programme can be used as evidence towards Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

3) Student Performance

Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the student performance with respect to module and/or programme content

PG T and L

I viewed over 45 pieces of work across all the modules plus completed portfolios. These contained examples of outstanding work as well as borderline pieces. Overall, the standard of the work is very high with few examples of borderline submissions. The strengths of the

best work are: scholarly and critical showing evidence of learning and development from the course; excellent use of literature to inform critique and practice. The weaker work was a little descriptive and less rigorous in terms of critical reflection and use of the literature. Other work requiring further development was either incomplete or discussion/critique was superficial. However, all work showed evidence of personal and professional learning and development throughout. I was involved in discussions regarding a referred piece of work submitted after a long delay. This was later classified as a Fail which I supported. However, the discussions raised issues about the length of time course participants could have to respond to feedback and resubmission.

I viewed one portfolio which was excellent both in terms of presentation and standard and I recommend that this (or part of it) could be used as an exemplar for future candidates.

ENMCA

I received over 20 pieces of work covering all assignments. I was able to view candidates' progress throughout the programme.

The student performance as evidenced by submitted assignments is generally very high. The work viewed this year was of a higher standard than previous cohorts and think this is due to the careful monitoring provided by the course team and their ongoing commitment to improving the assessment strategy. The best work was scholarly and critically reflective showing an in depth understanding of mentoring and coaching models. Work that hadn't quite met the standard was more descriptive or less critically reflective in terms of participants not delving deeply enough into the models and coaching approaches in their own contexts.

4) Learning and Teaching

Please comment on the effectiveness of the Learning and Teaching methods employed on the modules and/or programmes

PG T and L

EDU11105 – the standard of work in this module is consistently high – feedback from participants indicates that the tasks undertaken and the teaching and learning strategy used really help their development. The teaching observation process is particularly effective and participants comment on the value of this to their professional development.

EDU1101 – The independent studies seem to go from strength to strength – participants report positively about the opportunities this module offers in terms of researching their own practice. One candidate had been encouraged to take her research/professional study further. This module directly links to the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Last year I commented on the increased engagement in the use of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) by participants both as a participant on the programme and also with their own students. It is pleasing to note that this is still evident. One portfolio was presented in a digital format and it was very accessible. There is clear evidence that participants are applying what they are learning in TEL to their own practice – therefore, the teaching and learning methods model good practice.

ENMCA

This is primarily a work based award where participants draw on their mentoring experiences to demonstrate their proficiency, professional development and achievements. Tutors use a range of adult teaching and learning methods to support learning with a strong emphasis on peer learning. There is a real sense that participants learn from and support each other – genuine collaboration. The tutors have developed a programme that is highly relevant to the institution in term of continuing professional development.

5) Assessment

Please comment on the fairness and the rigour of the assessment and feedback process employed on the modules and/or programmes

PG T and L

As mentioned above there are very rigorous processes in place for first and second marking. Feedback is exemplary – detailed and constructive. The assessment strategy enables participants to receive formative feedback through self, peer and tutor means. This enables participants to improve as the course progresses.

The course team has undergone significant changes this year and it is recommended that all new team members undergo support and development to ensure that the high level of feedback and moderation continues.

The course team may wish to consider how to manage the small “tail” of participants on the programme to avoid any confusion with delayed submissions etc.

ENMCA

All work is double marked and feedback is also exemplary – encouraging with plenty of feed forward guidance.

6) Good practice

Please comment on any areas of good practice that you wish to highlight

PG Cert T and L

Continued use of Technology Enhanced Learning as a teaching and learning tool.

ENMCA

A diverse range of participants are now enrolling on the programme as demonstrated through gender mix and job roles across the institution. Some participants mentioned in their work that they had enrolled on the course due to its excellent reputation.

On a personal note – I was unable to attend any of the boards this year due to surgery which prevented travel. I am grateful to the programme teams for their patience in sending work through and ensuring I was kept up to date at all times. The Drop Box process worked really well, thank you.

7) Recommendations

Please specify any recommendations that you wish to make.

As mentioned in 5 above the course team may wish to consider how to manage the “tail” of participants who are still enrolled on the programme.

Section D:

This checklist is included to take into account the recommendation from the review of external examining arrangements in universities in the UK undertaken by Guild HE and Universities UK. We welcome any comments you have about this section.

Yes	No	NA
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Programme and Module materials: have you received or been given access to:

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- d. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria

X		
X		
X		
X		

Draft Examination Papers

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- b. Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?
- c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

		X
		X
		X

Marking Coursework/ Examination Scripts

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- b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking

X		
X		

appropriate?

- c. Were the scripts and coursework marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?

X		

Dissertations/Project reports

- a. Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

X		
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Board of Examiners meeting

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- c. Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?
- d. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?
- e. Were issues raised in previous report(s) addressed to your satisfaction?

	X	
X		
		X
X		
X		

Any other comments?

Please use this space to address any other comments you wish to make, including but not limited to

- a) any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body
- b) an overview of your term of office (when concluded).

This was my last year of my term of office for the PG Cert T and L but as the course is undergoing significant review and there have been a number of staffing changes I was asked to stay for another year. It is a pleasure to be asked and I have agreed to do so. I would like to formally acknowledge the exemplary leadership skills of the programme leader - she has developed a highly professional and rigorous course and been an excellent programme leader.

Thank you for completing this report and for undertaking External Examiner duties at

Edinburgh Napier University.

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