

Subject External Examiner Annual Report – 2016/17 (reporting period)

Name of External Examiner:	Clare Furlonger
Examiner's Institution / Employment base:	Bath Spa University

Name(s) of Programme(s):	Partner institution(s) involved in Programmes : (if relevant)
Cornwall SCITT PGCE	

Notes:

- Please respond fully to all bullet points as one sentence responses may not give the programme team sufficient information to enable them to enhance the programme.
- Please do not include names of staff or students in the report.
- In line with the Quality Code (Chapter 7, Indicator 14), reports will be made available in full to students (with the exception of any confidential report made to the Vice Chancellor). Reports will be amended where the External Examiner has contravened the requirement not to identify individuals, or in very exceptional cases where the External Examiner has included something intended to cause harm to the institution or to bring it into disrepute. Where text is removed from reports prior to publication this will be indicated by < ** > within the body of the report [[QAA Quality Code, Chapter B7, Indicator 14 refers](#)].
- **Collaborative provision:** For programmes with multiple collaborative partner deliveries, please ensure that your report provides separate commentary for each partnership.
- **QTS programmes:** If you are responsible for moderation on QTS programmes, please ensure that you complete Appendix 1 of this report as this is a requirement of our evidence base for Ofsted audit.

Thank you for your continued support and contribution to the University's quality assurance and enhancement process.

Please return your report by email (externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk) within **6 weeks of the Assessment Board** and, for undergraduate programmes, by **31st July**.

Annual Fee is payable on receipt of a claim form (available from www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers). Payment of fees is conditional upon completion of report.

Section 1 - Academic and Professional Standards

The information in this section informs programme review and development at all levels within the University. Please comment on the following:

1. *Whether the academic standards [and professional where appropriate] are comparable to similar modules in other HEIs in the UK and with which you are familiar.*
2. *The overall academic standard [and professional where appropriate] of the modules and thereby the standard of the award[s] of which they are components.*
3. *Whether threshold standards meet subject benchmark, FHEQ, and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.*
4. *Does the programme and its component parts continue to be coherent and generally up-to-date and at an appropriate level to enable students to meet the relevant aims and learning outcomes?*
5. *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*
6. *The opportunities provided to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities afforded to students.*
7. *The quality of learning opportunity afforded by the student placement (if applicable).*
8. *There is no formal requirement for External Examiners to meet with students but please comment, as appropriate, on any opportunities you have had to meet, or engage, with students.*
9. ***If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery), please state the name of the partner, and also comment on:***
 - a. *The comparison of standards between the University and Partner delivery of the programme (if relevant).*
 - b. *Whether student performance provided evidence of access to appropriate learning resources at the Partner.*
 - c. *The operation and management of the partnership between the University and partner.*

The quality of the provision at Cornwall SCITT compares very favourably to the standards and expectations across the other providers that I have experience of – both University/HEI providers and SCITT providers. The overall standard of the assignment submissions is appropriate and in some cases I felt that trainees entered for Level 6 were clearly capable of a higher level although I understand this is their considered choice. Level 7 submissions were certainly comparable to those I have seen elsewhere. The assignment criteria are well defined and certainly meet both expected academic and professional standards.

The academic programme is exceptional for a non-university ITE provider. It is thorough and covers a wide range of content relevant for developing critical thinkers and researchers. Its scope exceeds that of some university PGCE programmes with which I am familiar. The PGCE and professional QTS elements of the course appear to be seamlessly integrated and although some trainees reported the assignments as being a lesser priority overall, they could all appreciate the value of them in contributing to their professional development. It is commendable to see such enthusiasm and engagement in the academic PGCE elements of the course amongst the SCITT centre staff and the academic tutors in school. This is far more overt than that experienced in most SCITTs that I am familiar with.

I visited 3 schools, observed trainees teaching and was lucky enough to attend an afternoon with school tutors moderating final portfolios. I also had some in depth conversations with a number of other trainees in the schools whose teaching I did not observe. The lessons I saw were all very good examples of trainees teaching in their final weeks. One was particularly impressive and I found myself completely engaged with the learning. The responses of the pupils were quite exceptional. I was told they were the top set but to achieve this sort of level in a school in a disadvantaged area would be impressive for any

teacher. One of the lessons took place in a very warm room on a 'tropical' day with fans producing more noise than cool air. The trainee was exceptionally resilient and continued to teach the lengthy lesson as well as the conditions would allow. The third lesson was enjoyable and demonstrated some excellent interaction between teacher and pupils. I also noted the excellent relationship and interaction between the mentor and the trainee in the post lesson debrief. One lesson had a trainee in a support role so it was difficult to assess her professional skills as a teacher. I concurred with two of the proposed gradings and I was convinced of the third as I agreed that the weather had been a distinct disadvantage which definitely had a negative impact on the lesson. I did not see any low achieving trainees.

Feedback from the trainees was overwhelmingly positive. All trainees praised the structure of the course and the comprehensive nature of the documentation provided in a compact electronic format. As ever there were a couple of comments about the number of documents they worked with but in my experience this is always a challenge. There was one mention of the 'Digital Campus' which I was told was not in frequent use but the trainee felt this was not significant in any way. Trainees recognised the programme would be hard work and in all cases felt that it was, although they accepted that this is the nature of the teaching profession. They had all experienced some excellent support from schools and mentors and subject leaders. Subject leaders were unanimously praised and their sessions were very highly rated. All compared the opportunities they had been given favourably in comparison with trainees from other providers they had met during the year. One felt she had less support in her second school which has been reported back to the SCITT staff. Two trainees mentioned they would have appreciated further A level teaching but felt that hadn't been offered although the SCITT manager had a clear rationale for that and it did cross my mind that they might have requested it in the final weeks if they judged it to be important for their new posts. The programme manager was praised for her flexibility and the programme administrator was also seen as a key individual at the SCITT who helped keep trainees organised and on track during the year.

Some trainees felt that the assignments were an area of stress in the year but they all recognised the impact they had on thinking and practice. They felt well supported in the assignment preparation and commented on the quality of the Monday afternoon sessions which gave them a clear understanding of expectations and plenty of suggestions of recent and relevant reading and other resources. One trainee had failed an assignment and was extremely grateful for the excellent additional support which led to a pass on second attempt. Two trainees mentioned the support for the research assignment could have been more comprehensive but it is always difficult to strike a balance between giving trainees a choice in following their own interests and ensuring the support is sufficiently structured. The support documentation seemed wholly appropriate to me.

The moderation session enabled me to examine some final portfolios. Those of the higher achieving trainees were robust and substantial in terms of providing quality evidence for meeting the standards at a level commensurate with their proposed grade. The portfolio of the failing trainee was very poor in comparison and reflected his lack of engagement with the profession course. Some trainees felt that the structure and focussed advice about what constitutes evidence was left rather too late and that they had struggled with the collation of the final folder but in my experience this is a perennial problem as it is inevitable that best practice is evidenced towards the end of the programme when they are busy with job applications, completing teaching commitments and the usual end of course

demands. These small niggles did not detract from generally overwhelmingly positive discussions. The trainees themselves were a credit as they were positive and happy to spend time with me at this very busy time. They were all extremely pleased to have trained with Cornwall SCITT and no one regretted that decision. Indeed, some had advised friends to train with the SCITT in the future.

Overall feedback from the Professional tutors on the Cornwall SCITT was also very positive and the schools clearly value the partnership. They frequently work with a range of other providers but they all recognise the quality of the Cornwall SCITT and are committed to it. They find communications are excellent and praise the programme manager for her dedication and responsive, proactive approach. They were all extremely well informed about the programme and saw the meetings at the SCITT centre as an opportunity to keep informed as well as allowing them to discuss and feedback on ideas. They all felt their feedback was listened to and acted upon and that this supported their engagement with the SCITT. They all received an informative and well structured induction covering processes and developments and one tutor who moved roles within the SCITT still received a detailed briefing for her new responsibilities which made for a seamless transition.

The moderation meeting was a demonstration of the practice alluded to in many of the conversations I had in the schools. Despite the heat of the day, the Professional Tutors were engaged and enthusiastic. It was a reflection of the hard work, care and attention that clearly goes into making the Cornwall SCITT an outstanding provider.

Section 2 - The Assessment Process

The information in this section contributes to Departmental and programme quality processes and also informs programme review and development.

Please comment on the following:

1. *Whether the internal assessment / examination procedures are comparable with similar programmes in the UK.*
2. *The operation of the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and whether the procedures followed were fairly and rigorously conducted (including procedures governing extenuating circumstances, misconduct and borderline performance), and in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations.*
3. *The appropriateness of the design and structure of the assessment methods used, comparability and level within modules, and their effectiveness in measuring the overall learning outcomes. Where applicable please comment on the achievement of learning outcomes in professional placements / work based learning / work experience.*
4. *The distribution of marks [eg range, mean, clustering].*
5. *The moderation process and consistency of marking standards. Please elaborate, particularly with reference to multi-site delivery / collaborative provision (as appropriate).*
6. *The range of examinations papers / assignments provided for sampling purposes and their appropriateness in terms of subject / level / learning outcomes.*
7. *The rigour and fairness of the assessment process overall (including assessment criteria and marking schemes).*
8. ***If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery) please provide separate commentary in respect of each partner.***

The documentation and guidance provided for the academic assignments is excellent. As already reported, the Professional Enquiry course is wide ranging and an excellent support for I was given the opportunity to moderate a range of assignments linked to all levels. The internal assessment processes are thorough and robust. They compare favourably to other institutions. Feedback is consistent, well linked to the detailed criteria and accurately reflects the levels of assessment. Comments are supportive and pick up on areas to develop although more detailed comments on specific strategies to achieve the next grade level could be developed further by some assessors. The range of literature used by trainees was impressive although it is important to constantly remind them of the limited value of government policy documents in understanding the theory of practice and pedagogy.

The moderation meeting I attended was evidence of the systematic and detailed assessment of evidence for QTS. I listened to a number of rich discussions which demonstrated critical engagement with the issues around assessment of evidence within the portfolios. Some tutors worked late into the afternoon and clearly would not be satisfied with a less than forensic examination of evidence. I looked at a sample of folders and was impressed by the organisation, structure and comprehensive nature of the evidence. The supporting documents provided by the SCITT were well designed to support those who were interrogating the portfolios.

I noted the following:

- *The focus for all assignments is appropriate and the briefs are well structured and supportive*
- *The assessment comments are clear, related to the assessment criteria, appropriately positive but give suitable feedback. Some are very detailed and offer good suggestions for improvement*
- *Sometimes the summative comments do not fully reflect some important annotated comments in the text.*
- *The double marking provides plenty of feedback for trainees*
- *Trainees have the opportunity to reply to the assessor's comments – this is a very useful element of the assessment*
- *It appeared that some of the higher end L6 could write at L7 (and did to a certain extent) – particularly in the second sample of submissions. I assume they have chosen not to pursue Level 7. Once Level 7 has been attained I would recommend that all future writing is submitted at that level (or above).*
- *Some very strong discussion on practice and good links to literature*
- *Implications for own practice sometimes weaker than expected*
- *Some very interesting choices of aspects for investigation*
- *A few trainees were possibly too ambitious in their investigations bearing in mind the constraints of time and context*
- *Some trainees can clearly think but this is sometimes partially obscured by unsophisticated writing styles*

Section 3 - Organisation and Arrangements

The information in this section contributes to the University's monitoring process.

Please comment on the following:

1. *How the University has helped you undertake your role effectively.*
2. *The specific external examiner activities you have undertaken and your level of satisfaction with your involvement in assessment procedures at module level.*
3. *The appropriateness and timing of information, of draft examination papers for approval and student work for moderation.*
4. *The induction training designed to familiarise External Examiners with the University's Regulations/Procedures concerning assessment [newly appointed External Examiners only]*

The University of Cumbria has provided me with some excellent background information and support for my role. I did not attend the training event but received the presentation and felt that any questions I had would be answered. The administration was very timely, efficient and effective.

I had a very interesting two days in schools and an afternoon at Truro College attending the final portfolio/grading moderation event. I had conversations with eight trainees and saw three trainees teaching. I also spoke at length to two Professional Tutors, a Headteacher and to other colleagues at the moderation event. I felt that I was fully supported and able to write my report on the basis of what I observed and the conversations I had with different stakeholders. The visits were well organised and most schools were extremely welcoming and helpful.

I was sent an appropriate sample of assignments at L6 and L7, with feedback, from the SCITT. Some of the feedback was difficult to read on the copies but there were sufficient examples for me to get a clear idea of expectations at both levels.

Section 4 - Comments

The section provides you with the opportunity to comment on any aspect(s) of the programme(s) not covered elsewhere in this report. (If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery), please provide separate commentary, if relevant in respect of each partner).

Section 5 - Good Practice

List areas that you wish to commend as positive features/areas of good practice and/or innovative practice relating to teaching, learning and assessment which are worthy of dissemination and may be shared with other programmes within the University or elsewhere. **(If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery), please provide separate commentary, as relevant, in respect of each partner).**

- Very high quality Professional Enquiry course covering an impressive range of skills, knowledge and understanding associated with critical thinking, engagement with literature and approaches to research.
- Welcoming and accessible tutors who are fully committed to the programme – both PGCE and QTS elements
- Excellent leadership and communications
- Well developed assessment systems with clear criteria.
- Thorough and robust assessment processes

Section 6 - Issues which require Action/Response and Opportunities for Enhancement

Please list any recommendations or actions arising from your report along with any opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities offered to students.

It would be helpful if you could indicate which, in your opinion, are **urgent and essential, advisable or desirable**.

If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery) please provide separate commentary in respect of each partner.

Urgent

Essential

Advisable

Desirable

Section 7 - Issues and Recommendations from Previous Reports

Have issues raised in previous reports been appropriately considered and, where appropriate, acted upon?

N/A

Section 8 - First Year of Appointment

If this was the first year of your appointment, please comment on the level of support you received from (i) your mentor (if relevant), and (ii) the Department

I am satisfied with the support I have received from the university. I did not need a mentor as I have some years experience as an External Examiner. The Cornwall SCITT were extremely supportive and welcoming when I visited them in June.

Section 9 - Final Year of Appointment

If this is your final year of appointment, it would be helpful if you could give an overview on the progress that has been made during your period of office. This information will also serve to inform the incoming external examiner about the developments during the previous period of review. You might comment particularly on:

- The progressive development and enhancement of the learning, teaching and assessment provision.
- The standards achieved.
- The marking and assessment.
- The appropriateness of assessment procedures and processes.
- If your appointment includes programmes or modules delivered as collaborative provision (such as franchised delivery) please provide separate commentary, as relevant, in respect of each partner.

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Signed:

Name [please print]: CLARE A FURLONGER

Date: July 26th 2017

Once completed, please return by email to: externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk

OFSTED Quality Audit Checklist (QTS programmes only)

If you are responsible for moderation on QTS programmes, please include detail below under each heading (or provide a cross-reference to earlier sections of your report, as appropriate). This detail provides the University with an evidence base for Ofsted audit as well as an enhancement tool for our ITT programmes.

(a) Context

This programme is not relevant to the University's evidence base for Ofsted.

(b) Evidence Base

(c) Summary of key findings

(d) Outcomes for trainees

(e) Quality of the training across the partnership

(f) Leadership and management of the partnership

(g) Capacity to improve

Programme materials			
Did you receive:	Y	N	N/A
a. Programme handbook(s)?	X		
b. Module Guide(s)?	X		
c. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	X		
Draft examination papers			
a. (i) Did you receive all the draft papers?			X
(ii) If not, was this at your request?			X
b. (i) Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?			X
(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			X
c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			X
Marking examination scripts			
a. (i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?			X
(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?			X
b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			X
c. Were the scripts 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 choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?			X
b. Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?			X
Coursework/continuously assessed work			
a. Did you receive draft coursework titles?	X		
b. Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?	X		
c. Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	X		
Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements			
a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?			N/A
Assessment Board			
a. Were you able to attend the meeting?		X	
b. Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?			
c. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Assessment Board?			
d. Have you received appropriate feedback to any actions set at the Assessment Board?			
Student Engagement			
a. Were you provided with any opportunities to meet students during the year?	X		