

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)



External Examiners are required to complete and submit Reports at least annually and within one month of the programme Examining Board.

Completed External Examiner Report Forms should be sent to:

ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses will be made upon receipt of this Report Form and upon receipt in hard copy of a completed External Examiner Claim Form for Reimbursement of Fees and Expenses and expenses receipts. This Report Form and the associated Claim Form may be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

External Examiner Reports are made available in full to students. For this reason, and in accordance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, individual staff and students should not be named within the Report.

Please note that External Examiner reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

Cardiff University prefers External Examiners to complete their Report Forms electronically and to submit them by email as indicated above. If, for any reason an External Examiner prefers to provide their report in hard copy it should be sent to *Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.*

PAYMENT OF FEES CANNOT BE AUTHORISED UNTIL RECEIPT OF THIS COMPLETED FORM AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM

Name of External Examiner: Dr Ruth Cruickshank

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London

Programme of study and subject(s) examined: **SINGLE AND JOINT HONOURS IN FRENCH/BSCECON IN EUROPEAN STUDIES; LLB IN LAW & FRENCH (FRENCH LANGUAGE AND NON-FRENCH LANGUAGE OPTIONS)**

Academic Year/Session to which this report applies: 2012-2013

Freedom of Information Act

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

SECTION A

1.1 Programme Structure

Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).

The programme in French at Cardiff clearly meets QAA Benchmark standards for Modern Language and Area Studies as well as its own learning aims and outcomes. It is at once coherent and appropriately reflects current trends in French studies and student interests. Most impressively, it spans literature, film, cultural history and politics (and in some courses integrates all four). The second- and final-year options I examined amply reflect how Cardiff provides a stimulating range of appropriately challenging options which are based on high quality research and offer students across the board to broaden their critical horizons and hone their skills. They also provide the most able students genuine opportunities for intellectual engagement and growth. This year, I saw samples of the 2.1 and First range of language papers which revealed the expertise and rigour of teaching and the appropriateness of the assessments, for which candidates were fully prepared.

1.2 Comparability of Standards

Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?

Attainment meets QAA Benchmark standards and is comparable with other Russell Group institutions, with some impressive linguistic and intellectual achievements across content and language courses (written and oral). At the French Exam Board, I was surprised that the number of first class outcomes was lower than I might have expected given the excellence attained in some of the individual scripts I read, so perhaps a fuller range of marks could be used. However, it was pleasing to see very few Third Class degrees.

1.3 The Examination Process

Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.)

I did not see assessed coursework where courses were assessed both by examination and assignments (I have suggested that in future it would be good to be able to see coursework of borderline cases, perhaps in the couple of hours prior to the Exam Board). The percentage balance of coursework and examination is good. Marking and moderation were painstaking and equitable (though in future the reasoning behind the final mark could be made more explicit).

SECTION A (Continued)

1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been actioned?

The Handbook and course kits supplied by the School were once again comprehensive and extremely useful, amply equipping me to fulfil my responsibilities. I was also delighted to receive, as suggested last year, a clear schedule of exam dates, dates of likely dispatch of papers and deadlines for entering of marks, as well as frequent updates.

1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

N/A

1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

- (i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;**
- (ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;**
- (iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;**
- (iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme.**

I was impressed with the engagement and commitment of the team to fair and accurate assessment, as well as to providing an excellent range of stimulating courses. The Law/EUROP mark sheets are very helpful.

1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.

N/A

SECTION B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are 'No'.

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	X		

2.2 Comments

The new procedures responding to my suggestions last year were exemplary. It was particularly helpful to be able plan for the new spring second year exam cycle, as well as the summer exams.

Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	X		
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?	X		
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	X		
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?		X*	

2.7 Comments

2.4* The suggestion that scrutiny of exam papers prior to sending to the external examiners be more stringent was acted upon to positive outcomes this year. Progress can still be made on standardisation of rubrics and layouts. As mentioned above I have suggested that in future it would be good to be able to see coursework of borderline cases, perhaps in the couple of hours prior to the Exam Board.

Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	X		
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme's objectives?	X		
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?	X		
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?		X*	
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?			x

2.14 Comments

Issues with excessively tight exam schedules and turn around times have been addressed and hence pressures on markers, moderators, exam reps and externals. Given the timing of language papers, it was very helpful to receive orals to listen to well in advance.

2.12* As mentioned above I have suggested that in future it would be good to be able to see coursework of borderline cases, perhaps in the couple of hours prior to the Exam Board.

SECTION B (Continued)				
Coursework/Dissertations/Projects		Yes	No	N/A
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?	X		
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
2.17 Comments				
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		Yes	No	N/A
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?			x
2.20 Comments				
Examining Board Meeting		Yes	No	N/A
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?	X		
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?	X		
2.24	Cardiff University recognises the productive contribution of External Examiners to the assessment process and, in particular, to the work of the Examining Board. Have you had adequate opportunities to discuss the Programme(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	X		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?	X		
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	X		
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	X		
2.28 Comments				
<p>There were some issues with regard to the equitable consideration of extenuating circumstances that require clarification at an institutional level. These concern the distinctions between and rules concerning the treatment of those with formal documentation and those who had orally reported circumstances to members of staff who accordingly judged that these should be taken into account as a part of their duty of care. Clear guidance on these matters is required for the equitable treatment of students and for the authority of staff. The status of marking provision for students benefitting from Educational Support/Special Provisions also remains nebulous.</p>				
<p>Signed: R L Cruickshank Date: <u>10/7/13</u></p> <p>Please return this report by email to: ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk</p> <p>Your fee and expenses claim form, and any reports which cannot be emailed, should be sent to: Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.</p>				