



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Liz Yeomans		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Leeds Metropolitan University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MA International Public Relation and Global Communication Management		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	3 July 2013

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online.**

1. Programme Structure

The programme is structured to provide a very good balance of theoretical and practical modules. The course team continuously review the programme to ensure currency with theoretical and PR practice developments and ensure that these developments are reflected in the course content. As a recognised course of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the programme incorporates a large proportion of the recommended syllabus elements both conceptually (e.g. PR ethics; media law) and practically (e.g. press release writing). The richness of course content, however, does mean that two 20 credit modules: International PR Theory and International PR Practice may be considered as having too many assessed components, although there is no evidence to suggest that students feel over-assessed. There is a good mix of group work and individually assessed work across these modules and the relative weightings of assessments are balanced and appropriate to the student effort required.

However, to accommodate further additions to the curriculum (e.g. reflecting developments in PR and marketing evaluation practice), the course team may wish to review the range of topics covered, the intended learning outcomes and the assessment matrix across the programme to mitigate against possible overload.

2. Academic Standards

The course reflects the academic standards expected of students on a postgraduate course in accordance with the framework of higher education in the UK. All students are pushed to achieve level outcomes such as critical engagement with their discipline and consistently demonstrate a scholarly and professional approach. As stated in my report of last year, the standards of the programme compare very favourably and could be said to exceed standards at other institutions. Very strong work was evident in the samples that I examined; this is a testament to the hard work of the team in supporting students whose first language is not English and who have to meet academic expectations that are different from those that they may have previously encountered.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment methods are appropriate for a vocationally-orientated postgraduate programme. Students are assessed by coursework: typically essays, project reports or proposals and presentations. A dissertation is submitted at the end of the programme. Assessment methods demonstrate a good balance of traditional (e.g. essays) and applied assignments (e.g. PR projects). The number of assessments, while a little high in some modules, as previously stated, remain balanced and appropriate and are weighted according to the student effort required in terms of group and individual input; and the level of research, planning and presentation required.

Student achievement is measured fairly against the intended learning outcomes and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations. Assessments in modules of the same level are of a comparable standard.

The assessment criteria, marking schemes and award classifications are set at the appropriate level. Marking guidelines are applied according to the descriptors in the student handbook: however, to support greater rigour and explicitness in the marking and feedback process, the course team may wish to consider reviewing the key criteria and marking schemes for awarding distinctions between 70 to 79 per cent; and the key criteria for awarding distinctions of 80 per cent and above, as this is not always clear. This consideration is of particular relevance to the modules involving complex PR project work (e.g. requiring both presentations and reports), in which there may be a variation in the levels of 'excellence' demonstrated in specific elements of a project as well as the successful integration of these elements in achieving learning outcomes.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Last year I suggested that marking schemes should be adopted more consistently and tailored to fit each module assessment; and that typewritten feedback comments should replace handwritten comments where possible. Considerable improvements to the assessment process have taken place this year, including a more consistent use of marking schemes and typewritten feedback comments. However there is still a tendency to use 'standard' marking grids that may or may not be appropriate to the learning outcomes tested in a module.

Feedback comments are clear and constructive; some very detailed, reflecting the complexity of assessed work in some modules.

Last year I also suggested that learning outcomes for each module should be reviewed in line with postgraduate guidelines. Learning outcomes for each module are reflected in module handbooks and are set at the appropriate level. However, the Programme Specification (in the student handbook for 2012-2013) should also contain learning outcomes for the whole programme.

5. Preparation / Induction Activity (for new External Examiners only)

Not applicable.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

1. As a vocationally-orientated programme, the MA IPR&GCM provides opportunities for project work, including scope for involving 'real' clients. Some students have taken up this opportunity in the assessed work for Digital Communications Management, for example, using social media tools to support small arts organisations and public engagement.

There is scope for further 'client'-orientated involvement and I understand that the course team are considering ideas for involving external organisations in IPR Public Relations Practice (e.g. in the group project) to enhance students' employability.

Such opportunities could provide the momentum for further student-led enhancement activities (e.g. networking events; conferences, roundtables, workshops etc.)

2. Anonymised coursework (identifiable by student ID only) and marking was evident in some assessed work this year. Although anonymous or 'blind' first marking is not always possible with student project work, and especially presentations, the second-marking/moderation process should be able to overcome this through the involvement of assessors outside the module team.
3. Some assessed module presentations were recorded on DVD this year and this was a good opportunity to demonstrate the quality of students' research, ideas and presentation/communication skills.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

8. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-7 above for any answer of 'No'.

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Programme/Course Information				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		N	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
Marking Examination Scripts				
8.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
8.19	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 and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	Y		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE