

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from [ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).

**Cardiff University**

McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 0DE  
Wales UK

Tel please see below  
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4130

[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

**Prifysgol Caerdydd**

Tŷ McKenzie  
30-36 Heol Casnewydd  
Caerdydd CF24 0DE  
Cymru Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn gweler isod  
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4130

[www.caerdydd.ac.uk](http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk)

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Helen Wheatley		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Warwick		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BA in Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies / Journalism & Culture / Journalism & Communications / Media & Communications		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-19	Date of Report:	15/7/19

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation stage Examining Board in the case of postgraduate Master's programmes).

**Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).**

Please extend spaces where necessary.

**1. Programme Structure** (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

In my second year at Cardiff, I am now getting a better picture of the three degrees, but still struggling to differentiate them (I had some interesting discussions with staff about this whilst I was on site). The shared first year of the degrees is, I think, problematic (they are most obviously differentiated in the second year, which seems odd to me) and I would encourage a discussion about the differentiation of these programmes in year one. You might particularly want to think about what the Media and Communications students need to stop them feeling like 'Journalism' students in their first year.

I looked at a number of modules where students relative lack of training in textual analysis and an aesthetic enquiry into moving image culture was apparent – if you're looking at the concept of glocalisation in relation to Turkish soap opera or Asian superhero films, you need to be skilled in analysing films and programmes. I was pleased so see some historical enquiry in your programmes, and this really worked when it brought the past into conversation with the present (as in the War, Politics and Propaganda module).

Across the UK (and beyond, actually) the Students Union and others are calling for us to think about module design and the concept of decolonising the curriculum – I saw some excellent (Media Globalisation and Culture) and a number of pretty dire examples of curricula that addressed this issue. If this is not yet an issue at Cardiff, it's almost certainly coming; this might, therefore, be a moment to pre-emptively look at your whitest, most UK/US centric modules and see if there are small or large ways in which this can be addressed.

I was interested this year in the relationship between critical work and vocational training at JOMEC. There is some excellent vocational preparation being done in the Department (e.g. the new Employability module), and this is complemented by some of the differentiated assessment methods and curriculum innovations in other modules – e.g. Understanding Media Business). Some modules that announce that they do not offer vocational training (e.g. Spin Unspun) but I'd argue that engaging critically with contemporary industries in the way that you do in JOMEC is vocational training of a kind, and there might be a pedagogic story to tell about this that makes this more apparent to the students (i.e. even when they're not being explicitly trained in workplace based skills, the contemporaneity and critical urgency of many of your modules is doing a different kind of vocational training).

## **2. Academic Standards** (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

Academic standards were comparable to other UK HEIs I have worked at and externally examined; I was impressed to find that students at JOMEC were once again high achieving and ambitious.

## **3. The Assessment Process** (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

I saw a good range of work from second and third years of all three degrees and largely agreed the marking in nearly all cases (though I saw a bit of grade inflation at the top end of things, I think, and also some comments that suggested that markers were reluctant to award failing grades even when they felt that would have been justified). I hugely appreciated the work of Anna Hunt and her team to make all work available to me in hard copy. As student numbers rise in JOMEC, the sample is getting almost unmanageably huge; it is almost more than can be managed in the time allotted for the externals to come and look at it, and I wonder whether all modules need to be looked at by externals each year. It would certainly be impossible to manage this large sample online whilst navigating the vagaries of an unfamiliar electronic coursework management system. As with marking, increased quantity impacts on the depth to which one can engage with the work, and this might be thought about for the future. Also wonder whether looking at all firsts is a hangover from days when there were fewer of these.

I saw, exemplary, detailed module handbooks with differentiated assessment criteria for all your various assessment methods (as I commented last year, Cardiff has the most varied range of assessment methods I've seen in any UK HEI). The level of detail in the differentiated assessment criteria was really impressive (see for example the handbook developed for the new 'Employability' module).

Whilst I was really impressed by the range of assessment methods, it is clear that less able students often struggled to interpret some of the more complex and innovative briefs, and I would encourage colleagues at JOMEC to consider how they can be supported in this. I strongly urge that modules that are assessed by essay plan and then essay really offer detailed feedback on the plan in the first instance, particularly at the higher end of the marking scale (on one module (Public Relations and Political Communication) 53% dropped grades from plan to essay across the module, whereas 87% dropped down from those that got a first on their plan to start out with)

I wondered whether modules that include a participation grade see a markedly different kind of participation from students in seminars i.e. do students obviously 'perform' their participation? I'd be interested in having a discussion with staff about this.

**4. Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

*[Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.]*

N/A

#### **5. Year-on-Year Comments**

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

The major improvements were found in the running of the exam board (staff were careful to address the issues raised in last year's reports).

I still saw first class work where the marker's comments were very sparse indeed – this really needs addressing in order to challenge your brightest learners

**6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

N/A

**7. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement** (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

Students are really good at asking critical questions about contemporary issues, from internet governance to political communication and spin, to the global media market place: this really sets Cardiff apart. One module outline that I looked at explicitly articulated the JOMEC student's need for curiosity about the world and another talked about the need for students to develop their own 'voice': this is what sets apart your teaching and your students.

I examined some really high quality dissertations, particularly those applying a content analysis method. Students wrote on a wide range of topics from the representation of

indigenous tribes in the media to a beautifully written comparative study of the representation of disability in UK and Italian newspapers. It is clear that the JOMEK student is given the skills and confidence to be intellectually curious and ambitious in their research.

I was impressed by the quality of feedback given on the module (Understanding Media Business) that used audio feedback. This innovative form of feedback offered the students detail and nuance and a real sense of engagement with their work (and also refreshed the task of marking for the staff involved). This is a practice I will take back and share with my own Department, and would encourage colleagues in JOMEK to explore this as one of a number of innovative feedback methods they might use in their modules. While it should replace all written feedback, it could be seen as part of a suite of feedback options to match the suite of innovative assessment methods currently in use.

**8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)** (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

N/A

## 9. 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)
<b>Programme/Course information</b>				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	Y		
<b>Commenting on draft examination question papers</b>				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		N	
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A (were not sent)
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?		N	
<b>Examination scripts</b>				
9.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
<b>Coursework and practical assessments</b>				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y (in most cases)		
<b>Clinical examinations (if applicable)</b>				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
<b>Sampling of work</b>				

9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	<b>Y (just about)</b>		
<b>Examining board meeting</b>				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	<b>Y</b>		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	<b>Y</b>		
9.19	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?	<b>Y</b>		
<b>Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)</b>				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?		<b>N</b>	
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?		<b>N</b>	
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			<b>N/A</b>

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:  
[externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk)

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

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE

