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Sent by email to helen.wheatley@warwick.ac.uk

03 November 2020

Dear Professor Wheatley,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2019/20

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's report for the BA in Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, BA in Journalism and Culture, BA in Journalism and Communications, BA in Media and Communications.

Your report does not appear to raise any significant issues that require a more immediate response however, the School has been asked to address the following comments raised in your report:

- Differentiation between programmes: There were just a couple of modules where I saw significant crossover between curricula (e.g. Public Relations and PR and Spin Unspun, which need looking at side by side as there is repetition on the level of subjects being taught and reading being set).
- Decolonising the curriculum: 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.
- BAME authors: I surveyed the required reading on eight modules. Of this eight, six modules had no BAME authors in their required reading, and the other two (Media, Globalisation and Culture and Cultural and Creative Industries) had a couple of pieces each that were written by non-white authors. We all need to think very carefully about how we talk about race with our students and whose work we highlight and engage with in our modules and I signal it here again as an issue.
- Diversity and inclusion issues: one module was directing students towards the publication Spiked, which regularly features anti-transgender journalism without any kind of warning that this is what students should expect from it; if I was a trans student in JOMEK, I might appreciate some signal of this issue.



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- Adaptation of assessment criteria for non-traditional forms of assessment: Assessment criteria: the current assessment criteria, developed for standard essays, simply does not work for all of your brilliant, varied modes of assessment. It is not flexible enough to make sense for students producing a set of blogs, or short analyses, or portfolios, or presentations, or policy briefs.
- School-wide discussion of expectations on student feedback, structure and minimum requirements, and quality control of this.
- Moderation: How moderation/external examining will take place in relation to all forms of assessment.

I am confident that the Programme Team will endeavour to address the issues identified in your report and your comments will help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process.

Degree Outcomes

Whilst you have not raised this as a concern in your report from a subject specific point of view, the Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee has asked the School to review their degree outcomes profile as there has been a significant rise in first class honours degrees during 2019/20 compared with other years.

The School will be required to look at this in detail to try and understand any underlying factors that may have contributed to this both positive and negative. I am sure you will agree that it is important we ensure that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained with reference to external expectations in line with our responsibility to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement as specified by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) Statement of Intent to protect the value of UK degrees.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments, including:

1. Your positive comments regarding the programme structure, academic standards, and assessment process.
2. JOMEC's real strength lies in how you are preparing students for work in the creative and cultural sector, both critically and practically (including the outstanding module Employability which I looked at for the second time this year). I saw sector-leading work in this area.
3. I have been really impressed by the range of topics that students cover on their modules, and the fact that they are clearly invited to apply their learning to their own passions and interests.
4. I can confirm that the actions taken as a result of the variation of assessments in relation to industrial action and Covid-19 have been appropriate to protect the academic standards of the programme and have allowed students to achieve their programme level learning outcomes.
5. The application of the Safety Net Policy to ensure that students' award classification reflects their academic attainment on the degree programme, and that the degree classification is not affected by any potential dip in their academic performance in assessments undertaken during a period of disruption seemed to be applied fairly and appropriately.

In order to meet the expectations of the [QAA Quality Code](#), both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on the University's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wright', written in a cursive style.

Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar