



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Jessica Davies		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	The Open University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Certificate of Higher Education (Humanities and Law)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-14	Date of Report:	04.08.14

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

My comments from last year concerning the overall structure and content of the programme stand. The introduction of a new pathway to higher level study of English Literature and Language is very welcome and I understand that a further pathway in Media and Journalism studies is to be introduced in 2014/15, which should prove popular. There are clear efforts to make the courses appealing and engaging to students, and both pathways have attractive, informative and accessible course information and good take-up.

It would be good to see poetry included among the English pathway courses at some point in the future.

I endorse the proposal to ensure that appropriate levels of guidance and support are put in place for students who pursue these pathways to full-time UG study; there is clearly a role for a pathway co-ordinator who is able to act as a point of liaison for these students between LEARN and the relevant departments.

### 2. Academic Standards

As in 2013, the standards set for attainment are fully appropriate for qualifications at this level of study and the learning and teaching are consistent with programmes of study at the same level at other UK institutions I am familiar with, including my own. Quality assurance systems remain highly effective; in particular, the internal moderators' reports on each subject strand and their remarks on sample

assignments were once again invaluable to me in gauging student performance and the effectiveness of assessment processes.

### 3. The Assessment Process

The teaching and feedback overall is of a very high standard. As in 2013, I was impressed with the care and conscientiousness shown by the tutors in the assessment process; in the examples I saw the marking was meticulous.

Tutors clearly make real efforts to encourage students to submit assessed work, and overall the submission rate stands at an impressive 82% (2012/13). It is particularly high in Music (91%), and Creative Writing, English Literature and Media studies also do very well (83%).

The introduction of a staggered assessment structure in 2012/13, allowing for smaller-scale 'embedded' assessments, appears to have been a sound decision, allowing for clearer progression and the staged development of skills. There is an argument to be made, however, for word limits on the final assessment to be extended. I agree with the *Inside Narratives* pathway Internal Moderator's comments that a 750-word assignment may well inhibit a student's ability to produce a 'discursive' essay - of the kind expected of them when they make the transition to full-time UG study. I support the recommendation to extend final assignment word count to 1,000 words.

### 4. Year-on-Year Comments

I commented last year on the following features of the assessment process:

- *In general the number of Learning Outcomes could be reduced, while some modules are in need of some further discipline specific Learning Outcomes; for example, in the English Literature and Music history modules.*
- *It would be helpful to see a clearer relationship between Learning Outcomes and assessed work - and sometimes between assessment criteria and assessed work, as in the Music history modules*

2014- Overall the Learning Outcomes are fewer and more clearly related to assessed work and assessment criteria. It is also good to see some new, discipline-specific Learning Outcomes, as for example, in the English Literature modules.

- *The information in the Module Handbooks designed by tutors could be more consistent, so that a clear schedule of work is made available to students at the start of the module, together with a list of assessment tasks. It wasn't always clear to me what the assessments for each module were, as the Handbooks vary according to the tutor's approach in terms of its content and layout.*

2014 - Module information and tutor handbooks are much improved; more consistent and clearer in terms of week-by week study and in the descriptions of assignments. There is much evidence of careful re-working of the handbooks to include certain key pieces of information (such as a list of assignments), and the tutors are to be commended for their extended efforts to help students plan and anticipate the stages of their study.

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

N/A.

## **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

As in 2013, I was impressed with the documentation for the *Exploring the Past* Pathway. The Student Handbook and the sample Module Handbooks I saw this time were again exemplary, and this is the standard that other pathways might seek to model in the future.

The *Exploring the Past* pathway has been running for two years, and so the co-ordinator is in a position to provide information and data on the progress of the pathway students. It was very helpful to be able to see the numbers of students progressing to study full-time at SHARE, and their performance in relation to the cohorts there, and other co-ordinators may consider providing similar data on progression on their pathways when such information becomes available.

## **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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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	
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
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
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		<b>Yes (Y)</b>	<b>No (N)</b>	<b>N/A (N/A)</b>
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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			<b>N/A</b>

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

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk)

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