



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Ben Cocking		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Roehampton		
Programme and/or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BA Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-2015	Date of Report:	30 th June 2015

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

This continues to be a very well structured programme. It offers an excellent mix of theoretical, practical and employability based modules. Whilst the programme is very broad ranging it nonetheless retains a strong sense of coherence. As in previous years there is a clear articulation between the aims and learning outcomes of the modules I examined and the overall aims of the programme.

2. Academic Standards

The standard of work I examined this year was exceptionally high, with a small but significant rise in the number of students attaining overall classifications in the 1st and 2.1 bands. Each year I have visited Cardiff and talked to JOMEC staff I have been struck by the ways in which they seem to be continually reflecting on teaching practices and assessment methods and revising and developing them accordingly. My sense is that it is this commitment to excellent teaching practices that continues to drive up academic standards.

3. The Assessment Process

On the modules I examined (both during my visit to Cardiff in June and those that were posted out to me earlier in the academic year), the assessment strategies were very well designed, clearly testing the aims and learning outcomes of the modules. Looking across 2nd and 3rd year modules, the assessments are appropriately levelled and there is a clear sense of progression from the 2nd year into the 3rd year.

The marking process has clearly been conducted in a rigorous manner. It is evident that staff put a great deal of effort and consideration into marking work and giving feedback. The marking was consistent between modules and with the quality of the coursework.

As with last year, several different types of double marking and/or moderation seem to be being practised. On some work double markers had added detailed comments indicating how and why they agreed/disagreed with the first marker's mark. In other cases a covering letter written by the second marker was included.

It would be worthwhile the team reviewing these practices and committing to one consistent format. The covering letter (ideally with a brief note of the first and second markers marks) seems like excellent practice in that it makes the double marking process very clear to the external examiner.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

There is an excellent range of modules on offer on this programme. Over the course of my period of external examining at Cardiff the continuous development of core modules and the practice of evolving specialised modules around staff research interests is excellent – it gives the whole programme a very contemporary and current feel and offers students a great deal of choice.

It should also be noted that the quality of students' work has improved year on year. This is very impressive given that it was already at an impressively high level at the beginning of my tenure in 2012/2013.

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

N/A.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There is a very strong sense of reflection and development across the programme. For example, this year the second marking procedures for the dissertation module have changed. The new process seems to be working well and across all the modules I examined this year (and indeed amongst all the staff I met) there is a real commitment to exploring ways of improving and enhancing provision throughout the programme.

As with previous years, the breadth of modules on offer on the programme is very impressive and exceptional range of topics and issues students engage with throughout their studies is evident in the diverse array of topics students have pursued in their dissertations.

In addition to engaging students with a very broad range of theoretical and analytical perspectives, the programme also includes some very innovative modules that are more 'practice'/employability focused. For example, this June I looked at MC3614 Managing Media Communications and MC3602. These modules not only engage students with more 'practice' based coursework (such as producing apps) but enable students to gain skills that are very applicable to the realities of working in the creative industries today.

The practice of inviting externals to review coursework on site is, in my view, exemplary. It affords external examiners the opportunity to meet with the module leaders and also, crucially, to discuss observations with the other external examiners on the programme. This really helps each external examiner form a more rounded impression of the programme and, from a quality assurance perspective, helps ensure that there is consistency between the external examiners.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

N/A

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?	Y		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?	Y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
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		
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