



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

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|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| | For completion by External Examiner: | | |
| Name of External Examiner: | Jaynie Bye | | |
| Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner: | Jaynie Bye Limited/Immediate Media | | |
| Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report | MA Magazine Journalism | | |
| Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report: | 15/16 | Date of Report: | 27.07.16 |

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

1. Programme Structure

The content of the course is deep, varied and very well set out, as can be seen from the course map. Its stated aims and outcomes are very closely aligned. The course structure is admirably vocational, yet manages to maintain an academic rigour worthy of an institution of this calibre. There is a sound balance between the theoretical and the practical, with group work (for example, the mini-mag project) added to the individual assignments. Industry relevance and preparation for employment is at the core, with tutors keeping abreast of new developments and adding these into the briefs. Modules are regularly refreshed, ensuring that the content stays current and relevant to future employers.

It's clear that students on this course are provided with exceptional tuition and up-to-date tools, enabling many to produce work of a high standard.

The discipline of supplying weekly news stories, alongside the weight of the other assignments, mimics the pressure of live journalism and helps to turn out Cardiff graduates who are work ready. From the samples I received, most students demonstrated a good nose for news, fact-checking skills and a high degree of writing proficiency. Almost all students made excellent use of the sidebar content, using Q&As and lists to complement each main news item. In keeping with the course focus on media currency, students provided a full digital package, with use of captioned images, maps, social media links and embedded video. Tutors' remarks

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were extremely helpful and up-to-date, for example, tips on customising *bit.ly* links, and using *thinglink* to improve image interactivity.

The character profile work provides a good example of the impressively clear briefs given to students. As well as researching and writing a colourful character profile, students are required to provide captioned digital images, as well as video or audio content. The video content on *alt.cardiff*/YouTube works really well here; I felt the audio content seemed a little old-fashioned in this environment. Students who gained the highest marks made great use of the techniques at their disposal, some filming and editing video content, and others, focussing on core skills, providing some warm, engaging copy.

alt.cardiff is a valuable resource for students, tutors, examiners and potential employers, again providing a live environment and encouraging students to follow a detailed brief, to a deadline. Weekly editorial meetings, at which students are expected to pitch ideas based on five specified topic areas, provide a real taste of life 'in the real world'. Looking at the published work on *alt.cardiff*, it was satisfying to see that students were absorbing and acting on the tutors' detailed suggestions for improvement on their original written submissions, before publishing their articles live.

I noted that the Briggs layout brief caught out a few of the students, reflecting the challenging nature of this seemingly straightforward production skills exercise. It's encouraging to see these heartland, traditional skills still being given weight within the broad scope of the Cardiff MA.

I was also impressed that students are encouraged to thoroughly review their industry placements, needing to show understanding of the company structure, business models and brand profiles. There is solid advice offered on CV preparation and job applications too.

Finally, the Class Magazine Projects provide all students with a great opportunity to create a brand new magazine proposition from scratch, encompassing all disciplines from research, through editorial and design, to production and execution of a detailed web and social media plan.

The resulting concepts had well-targeted content, with plenty of links both to social media and back into their accompanying websites. What is clear from both this year's projects is the incredible amount of work done by the students, in such a limited time.

2. Academic Standards

Standards are set very high at JOMEK. The sheer depth and breadth of teaching in such a short time is impressive. It's clear from the work of the candidates that many students on the course are able to produce work of an extremely high quality. Students who fell short of a work-ready standard were few; indeed, it is heartening to see that the top-level tutor commitment and expertise at JOMEK produces students who could easily 'hit the ground running' in a work environment. In my experience, Cardiff students arrive extremely well-prepared to meet any challenge that a first job

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in magazine and digital publishing throws at them, and are often imbued with a sense of confidence that allows them to go beyond what is required.

3. The Assessment Process

Without exception, this year, I found the marking to be extremely appropriate to the ability shown, giving me no cause to question the range and fairness of awarded grades. Achievement is measured very fairly against the detailed criteria and assignment briefs supplied to the students. Marking is rigorous, fair and consistent. All processes are clear and transparent, using assessment criteria feedback sheets which are easy to use and interpret.

The notes to students advise, “Learn to love the red pen!” and there is no skimping on the amount of red ink deployed by the tutors in their enthusiastic provision of feedback on the submitted work. From my experience of this course, there is an abundance of support available to the students, with, as well as the trusty red pen, plenty of verbal feedback, regular tutorials and active group discussions.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my fourth year as an external examiner on this course and it’s been extremely heartening to see it develop into a first-class programme that puts this MA at the very top in its field. This year, more than ever, I felt that big strides had been taken to ensure that students leave the course fully prepared for their first job. Work readiness is clearly a main priority here.

Last year, I felt a little disappointed that some of the students had underachieved in their focus on launch promotion and social media activity to support their mini-mag projects. This has clearly been rectified, with this year’s cohort producing well-edited launch videos, showcasing their passion, ideas and research. Social media launch awareness has hit a high this year, with excellent use of Facebook and Twitter drip feeds leading to the launch dates. I was slightly surprised that most of the samples I was given featured fairly safe territory - art, music, comedy - but all groups had made a very good effort.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

7. Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations (External Examiners for postgraduate Master's Programmes only, see also 9.23-9.29 below)

There is an impressive variety of approach taken by the Masters students this year, not just in choice of topic and medium, but also in the information-gathering methods they have chosen. This gives an indication of the breadth of teaching offered on this course and the lack of restrictions put on the development of ideas. Students who chose to tackle challenging subjects did so with maturity and rigour.

Like last year, I suspect that it's a brave student who opts to tackle the Enterprise Project. The extra work involved in producing a market-researched business plan to support their original idea is a big challenge. Tackling a publisher-level project of this nature is not fully acknowledged, I feel, by the award of an MA Journalism. Perhaps an MA or MSc Publishing (or at least a publishing module) might be an option for the future.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

It's my fourth and final year as External Examiner and I can happily report that it has been an extremely interesting and enjoyable experience. The timing of my appointment has allowed me to watch this course grow into a first-class MA programme which really delivers on its promise to provide each student with the skills to "meet any challenge your first job on a magazine throws at you". There is still work that can be done, I believe, to promote this course to potential employers. While awareness has certainly grown in recent years, I still sometimes meet with blank faces when I mention the course to editors and publishers. Likewise, in promoting to potential students, I don't feel that a course that delivers content excellence is fully represented by the template provided by the Cardiff University website. Would the University consider a link from there to a bespoke site showcasing (perhaps created by) current students? I'm sure this would help to inspire a new intake.

I owe particular thanks to the Magazine MA course staff for their guidance and expertise. The rigorous way in which they have chosen and provided relevant materials, samples and information have made this role a pleasure. I shall genuinely miss being an External Examiner next year and I hope my successor enjoys the role as much as I have.

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 above for any answer of 'No'.

| | | Yes (Y) | No (N) | N/A (N/ A) |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Programme/Course Information | 4 | | | Updated May 2016 |

| | | Yes (Y) | No (N) | N/A (N/ A) |
|--|---|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 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 | | |
| Draft Examination Question Papers | | | | |
| 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 |
| 9.5 | Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments? | | | n/a |
| Marking Examination Scripts | | | | |
| 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 | | |
| Coursework and Practical Assessments | | | | |
| 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 | | |
| Clinical Examinations (if applicable) 5 | | Updated May 2016 | | |

| | | Yes (Y) | No (N) | N/A (N/ A) |
|--|---|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 9.15 | Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments? | | | n/a |
| Sampling of Work | | | | |
| 9.16 | Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work? | y | | |
| Examining Board Meeting | | | | |
| 9.17 | Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting? | y | | |
| 9.18 | Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction? | y | | |
| 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? | | | n/a |
| Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable) | | | | |
| 9.20 | Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees? | | | n/a |
| 9.21 | If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees? | | | n/a |
| 9.22 | Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules? | | | n/a |
| Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable) | | | | |
| 9.23 | Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent? | y | | |
| 9.24 | Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)? | y | | |
| 9.25 | Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners? | y | | |
| 9.26 | Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board? | | n | |
| 9.27 | If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures? | | | n/a |

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| | | Yes (Y) | No (N) | N/A (N/ A) |
|------|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 9.28 | Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied? | | | n/a |
| 9.29 | Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate? | | | 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:

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

SAMPLING OF TAUGHT MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

External Examiners shall be expected to see prescribed numbers and ranges of Dissertations, but not to mark them, on the following basis:

At least 10% of Dissertations for a postgraduate taught Master's Programme, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure) must be seen by the External Examiner(s). Where the total number is less than 10, all Dissertations must be seen by the External Examiner(s) #.

Dissertations seen by External Examiners should include examples from across the whole range of achievement (i.e. Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail).

External Examiners will retain the right to see other Dissertations at random.

Where more than one External Examiner is appointed on a Programme, at least 10% of Dissertations, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure), should be seen collectively by the External Examiners.