

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).

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr. Gauti Sigthorsson		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	U. of Roehampton		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BA Journalism and Communications BA Media and Communications BA Media, Journalism and Culture		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2019-2020	Date of Report:	30 Jun 2020

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)

As before, the curriculum in modules I sampled showed an impressive range of topics, theoretical approaches, and methods for engaging with media, communications and journalism.

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

The work reviewed was of a standard commensurate with what I have seen at other UK HEIs. I saw no marks that I would disagree with when looking at samples of student work and the feedback provided by staff.

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

Across the modules I've looked at, marking and feedback is fair, with the style and quality of feedback consistent across different courses. Comments on student work across the board refer back to criteria and demonstrate a constructive "feed-forward" approach. As external, it was easy to see the rationale for individual marks in the

comments. I reviewed some very impressive examples of student work, with the best showing good engagement with the curriculum, theoretical concepts, and creative challenges. There are good examples of imaginative, engaging assessment design to be found here. In particular, assessments that challenge students to apply the concepts and knowledge seem particularly successful.

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](#).]

This year has been an exceptionally difficult one, with students affected both by industrial action and Covid-19. Any comparison with or continuity from the previous year is secondary. Instead, the handbooks, assessment briefs, student work and the feedback were testament to the hard work and adaptability of students and staff. Under the circumstances, I note how resilient the assessment briefs were, and how accommodating they were of contemporary topics that students brought into their work (e.g., Black Lives Matter).

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)

My thanks to the administrative team for making the sample and ancillary documents available through Blackboard. The setup was easy to navigate. In particular, having second markers' reports available alongside the course handbooks made it easy to read each sample in context.

Overall, the course handbooks and other documentation are of a high standard, with information laid out in a predictable format. For reviewing materials online, I note that it is more convenient to read documents in PDF format (rather than downloading Word documents).

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

Noteworthy instances of good practice, particularly in assessment (from the sample provided to me):

MC2623 Data Journalism in Theory and Practice: Impressive combination of theoretical and practical work in the assessment. The best work in the sample illustrates how to tell a story with data and visualisations.

MC2627 Celebrity Culture: A very good course handbook. Assignment 2 on "celebrity production" is a great example of imaginative, engaging assessment, and the sample of student work showed how well this worked for students.

MC3593 Media, Racism, Conflict: Research essays are timely, interesting - very good work done by students under challenging circumstances. Similarly, in MC3635 A Century of War Photojournalism, the choices of topics and examples illustrate the timeliness of this module. It was refreshing to see how flexible and accommodating the assessment briefs in both modules were to the compelling topics of the moment (especially BLM).

MC3636 Immersive Media: The Project Proposal is an example of outstanding good practice in assessment, building practical application on the foundation of theoretical and contextual knowledge from the curriculum. Some very impressive work by students presented here.

Enhancement:

Across the board there is good variety of assessments, but in modules where all the coursework is in written format (e.g.. essay-questions), I suggest that the team consider whether this is inclusive enough. For example, in MC3631 Feminisms and Television History, both assessments follow a question-essay format. This seems unnecessarily narrow for such a rich, diverse topic of study.

**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?			
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			
<b>Commenting on draft examination question papers</b>				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
<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?			
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
<b>Coursework and practical assessments</b>				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?			
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?			
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?			
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			
<b>Clinical examinations (if applicable)</b>				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
<b>Sampling of work</b>				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			
<b>Examining board meeting</b>				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?			

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			
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>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?			
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			

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

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