



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Elain Price		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Media Department, College of Arts and Humanities, Swansea University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Journalism – Yr Ystafell Newyddion 1 (MC2617) and Yr Ystafell Newyddion 2 (MC2618) modules		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-16	Date of Report:	20 July 2016

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

I examined only two modules this year, and so I cannot comment how these modules sit within the School's wider provision. However, it was good to see progress in Welsh medium teaching since last year, and a good cluster of students pursuing the modules, with some taking both. In accordance with my impressions of the provision last year it was good to see the close link with the industry and the Welsh feel of the topics discussed and the stories created by the students. I am positive that the students had worthwhile experiences on these modules.

Regarding the module structure, both had several similar elements – particularly the assessment task. However the essay topics and various supplementary elements in the journalistic tasks (e.g. presenting pictures and the implications of this) provided variety, new skills and knowledge for the students pursuing both modules.

Despite the similarity, for those students taking both modules, the similar elements enabled them to track their progress in skills and understanding of the field, and this was evident in the results obtained by some students. I feel however that there could be more variety to ensure that those students taking both modules could learn a range of different skills. One example that could be considered would be for one module to focus on web journalism and the other on print, radio or television, or

maybe different themes could be introduced in the two modules so that the students could develop expertise in journalism on different subjects.

## **2. Academic Standards**

Unlike last year, when I felt that the marking was a little generous, I did not get that feeling this year. Certainly there were one or two marks with which I disagreed, but generally those were exceptions.

I was very pleased to see challenging and contemporary essay topics. The essays were not only relevant to the module but also encouraged the students to engage with current debates regarding journalism and the media in Wales. The strongest essays therefore dealt with the recent report by the Institute of Welsh Affairs and Ofcom's current research. One or two of these essays were excellent and very mature for second-year students.

## **3. The Assessment Process**

There was a range of assessment in the modules with a combination of traditional academic tasks (essay) and analytical tasks (news values) and creative tasks (journalistic reports). Certainly this variety within the modules is laudable, although a slightly different focus should possibly be considered as discussed above (see section 1) across the two modules. I would also like to present more detailed comments on three specific aspects of the assessment:

### **3.1 Feedback**

Across all tasks and both modules I felt that there were weaknesses in correcting language errors in the journalistic reports and essay texts. Although the lecturers' feedback paragraphs referred in general to deficiencies in grammar and syntax, those errors were not identified and noted on the text itself. I feel that without these corrections on the text it is very difficult for students to learn from their mistakes and improve for their next tasks. This was much more evident in one module (Yr Ystafell Newyddion 1 – MC2617) than the other, although I would have liked to see more correction of linguistic errors in both modules. Students' attention needs to be drawn to weaknesses in mutation, spelling, syntax and also the English autocorrect. Although it can be a bother in Grademark, more of this needs to be done. I do not recommend punishing students more for their errors, but rather that the marking should draw attention to errors so that the students can improve their skills.

### **3.2 Criteria**

I feel that the journalistic tasks and the news values tasks should have their own unique and clear criteria. The general criteria for essays do not provide adequate guidance to enable students to know what lecturers are looking for and how the work will be marked. I understand that this is already in hand for the next academic year.

On an associated matter there needs to be more clarity regarding the way that marks for the two tasks completed in class tests contribute to that assessment's mark. Are both of these 50% of the assignment mark or does the article count for more?

### **3.3 Second marking**

This year I saw more evidence of second marking with copies of correspondence between lecturers. However I feel that a clearer system is needed which would record all discussions. I could see the opinion of the second marker, but very often there was no record of the first marker's response to those recommendations, and why the final mark was then awarded. I would recommend that a specific leaflet be created to meet this need.

### **4. Year on Year Comments**

I was pleased to see that the concerns that I had last year about essays had completely disappeared, the essays this year were in general of a much higher standard and, as I have already mentioned, dealt with very contemporary sources and topics.

However I was disappointed that more had not been done on the issue of correcting language which I drew attention to last year. In fact, I felt that on one module this year (Yr Ystafell Newyddion 1) the language corrections and feedback had weakened since last year.

Unlike last year, the modules did not run concurrently across level 5 and level 6 this year, and so the third year missed out on Welsh provision. However I am very pleased to hear that the provision is to expand next year to incorporate modules on levels 4 and 6, and I look forward to hearing more and reading the students' work next year.

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

N/A

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

Like last year, the opportunity for students to improve their skills by undertaking more than one journalistic writing task (under different circumstances) within these modules is laudable as it enables the students to incorporate any feedback received and act on it.

I would also like to note that I very much like the additions to the news tasks such as devising a pithy hashtag, and particularly the task of contributing pictures to accompany the news story as this makes the students engage with new considerations such as consent etc.

As I have already noted, the contemporary topics of the essay questions were laudable as they allowed the best students to engage with academic publications and current reports on the media industry in Wales.

As to improvements, as noted above, more linguistic corrections need to be noted on the students' work, unique criteria should be created for the journalistic tasks, and

more differentiation between the two modules should be considered to ensure a variety of experiences for students taking both modules.

## **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'.

		✓	✗	N/A
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	✓		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		✗	
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			✓
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			✓
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			✓
<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?			✓
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			✓
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			✓
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			✓
8.10	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>				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	✓		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	✓		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	✓		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?		✗	
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			✓
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	✓		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		✗	
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			✓

		✓	x	N/A
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?			✓
<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?			✓
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			✓
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			✓

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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McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE