



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Peter Liddel		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	MA		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MA Ancient History MA History and Archaeology of the Greek and Roman World MA Ancient and Medieval Warfare MA Late Antique and Byzantine Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013/14: taught element	Date of Report:	26/6/14

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

According to its stated aims on its website, the MA in Ancient History is designed to be flexible, enabling students to pursue their own interests whilst gaining a solid foundation of research skills. The structure of the programme and the modules available do exactly that: they offer students the opportunities to improve their writing and presentational skills, to develop knowledge of specialist areas, to engage closely with material and literary sources and to develop the skills in critical analysis which are important for postgraduate research work. An excellent range of topical courses available make wonderful use of the research expertise of the department, and offer students an excellent introduction to research-level work.

Postgraduate Greek I and II and Latin I and II provide a foundation to these languages. Course units in Greek and Latin Historical texts extend this training in the right sort of direction

I was impressed by the very specialised courses on offer in the MA Ancient and Medieval Warfare and MA Late Antique and Byzantine Studies: it is clear that students are able to benefit from the expertise both of colleagues in the History and Ancient History departments, and in particular in the close expertise in ancient and mediaeval warfare provided by both departments.

2. Academic Standards

These seem to me very good, and of comparable quality to those in other institutions in the Russell group that teach Ancient History. The excellent range of specialist courses in ancient history on offer have enabled candidates to address important questions, to display a critical approach to ancient evidence and modern scholarship. Students at the upper end of the cohort have produced innovative and original work. The teaching they have received at this stage of the MA has provided excellent training in research methods and will stand them in good stead for research-based work at the MA dissertation and, where appropriate, at PhD level.

3. The Assessment Process

Feedback seems fair and detailed: MA students, who are progressing towards a MA Dissertation will benefit from them. In cases where first- and second-markers disagree significantly about a mark, I saw carefully documented account of how they came to an agreed mark, which was a clear improvement on last year.

I was sent a good amount of work, and received most of it in good time.

Extenuating circumstances, etc., were dealt with very fairly.

It would have been more convenient had I received electronic copies of the proformas for externals' comments per course-unit. I did not use the paper copies of the forms that were sent to me with the hard copies of essays.

Owing to a misunderstanding, students taking PG Latin and Greek had been advised that final assessment would be based on 100% examination rather than 50/50 class test and final examination. However, this problem was overcome fairly by introducing ad hoc 100% exam assessment. I strongly recommend the introduction of a written syllabus/course guide for these courses as a way of avoiding such a misunderstanding in the future.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

I am satisfied that the high standards achieved last year are being maintained.

In future years it would be good to receive a comprehensive list of courses available to students on these MA programmes.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

My feeling is that the level of specialist modules offered in these MA courses is excellent, and will offer students an excellent foundation to undertake research in these areas, should they wish to do so.

From the work I have seen, it is clear that Cardiff MA students taking the MA receive an excellent range of instruction in analysing and combining literary and material

evidence, in critical assessment of scholarly problems and methodologies. They often make instructive use of theoretical and comparative approaches.

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)
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?			n/a
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?			
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?			
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?			
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?	Y		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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