

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2013-2014 - MA in Translation Studies**

Dear Professor Rothwell,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of Modern Languages in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

### Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

*"We are very grateful for a number of issues raised by Professor Rothwell, as they will help us to continue improving what is still a relatively young, albeit very successful, Master's course. Having consulted the relevant staff involved in the running of the MA in Translation Studies, please see below the answers to the issues raised by Professor Rothwell:*

**[3] the External Examiner's suggestion that "a little more consideration be given to awarding marks at the top of the scale, by reference to the generally comprehensive and well worked-out criteria" and related comments.**

*To use the full range of marks and encourage markers (external and internal) to consider marks at the top of the scale has been the MA Convenors' and PGT Directors' intention for a number of years. However, the remarkable number of tutors involved in the marking of essays and translation assignments, everyone with diverse but mutually reinforcing and complementary marking habits and practices, make this objective occasionally difficult. We will continue to remind tutors of the importance of using the full range of marks, especially those at the top of the scale.*

**[4] detailed observations and recommendations regarding the nature and assessment of Dissertations, including:**

- **the recommendation that "ALL dissertations be fully annotated throughout by both internal markers";**

*This recommendation implies that we should not practice blind marking, which has been done occasionally in the past. We very much welcome the External Examiner's suggestion and from now onwards all dissertations and ATPs will be fully annotated, as well as awarded a mark, first by the first marker (normally the supervisor and the person who knows more about the process), and then by the second marker, who should benefit from the first marker's observations.*

- **a request for sight of the "full set of dissertation marks" and the "full documentation and guidance given to students about dissertations (and related recommendations "in the case of literary ATPs");**

*This recommendation has already been successfully implemented.*

- **the problem of principle in allowing students to undertake translations, at this level, between languages in which staff have limited competence;**

*This is a difficult point since the MA in Translation Studies, as designed in 2009, has this unique characteristic that has made it very successful with both*

*home and overseas students: they can choose to translate from any language to any language, and the School of Modern Languages has the responsibility of providing external tutors when the language is not one covered by the School's language staff. However, since the External Examiner has reservations about this practice, this is a point that will be discussed at the next PGT Board of Studies.*

- ***the role and use made of assessment criteria by all stakeholders and related recommendation for a "standard report form" to be devised and used by markers, to include a "record of discussions" between markers.***

*We very much welcome this recommendation and a 'box' where the discussion between the first and the second markers is recorded will be added to the ATP/ Dissertation Assessment Criteria Sheet. This will complement what has been said above regarding non-blind marking."*

### Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[4] the responsiveness of the programme team to your earlier suggestions;**
- c. **[6] your commendation of the "excellent organisational work" of, and support received from, the Programme Director;**
- d. **[6] your further commendation of identified elements of the programme.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

In order to meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on Registry web pages and will be available publically.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Dr S L Williamson

for Dr C B Turner  
Academic Registrar