



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Philip Cowan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Hertfordshire		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report including any dissertation stage reports	MA/POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXAMS; MEDIA LAW EXAM		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/15	Date of Report:	30.06.15

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

A good understanding of how local government works is a vital tool for the new journalist, who is likely to find their first post on a local media outlet.

Clearly, the inner workings, limitations and accountability of local government has been described and explained in clear and extensive detail to these students. The detailed knowledge and firm grasp of local government demonstrated by many of the candidates is testimony to the solid teaching and guidance provided by staff.

2. Academic Standards

Both marking and moderation has been applied appropriately for a Masters/post graduate programme and with close scrutiny to the work, producing fair marks. The high marks for some are justified by the detail, relevance and accuracy of the responses. The fail marks are equally justified by the lack of detail, relevance and accuracy of what has been written.

Grammar and spelling mistakes have been noted, which is correct for any journalism module, and is in accordance with the learning outcomes for the modules.

3. The Assessment Process

Some points for consideration

There are a few minor discrepancies in the module handbooks which should be corrected:

The latest *Politics UK* edition now dates from 2010 and a new edition is likely imminent; the edition cited in the handbook is from 2007.

The Welsh Assembly is listed under local government in the handbook, but is assessed under national government. Since the two exams are at different times, this might make the students devote time to the revision of a subject with is inappropriate for their forthcoming exam, or indeed, use out-of-date text.

The first of the learning outcomes (gained knowledge of the public administration context in which the media has to operate) is clearly assessed by the exam. However, it is less clear how the other learning outcomes are assessed by this exam, at least directly.

As such, it might be worth considering a line of questioning which more closely matches the journalistic learning outcomes. This could perhaps be done by using 'scenario' style questions which demand knowledge of local government and how a journalist would cover such a scenario. E.g. a question could ask a candidate what is the planning application process and how would a journalist cover a controversial planning application (such as housing in a conservation area); who might they interview at each stage and what information might they seek, and so forth.

Media Law

As with public affairs, this is an essential module for all would-be journalists. Again, it has clearly been taught with knowledge and enthusiasm, with the best candidates demonstrating a good practical knowledge of how the law pertains to the profession.

The best students have demonstrated a good grasp of the new libel legislation. The scenario style questions are very appropriate for this subject. Students often find it hard to translate knowledge into practice and it is essential for journalism that they know how to apply the law to their own practice. This exam certainly assesses this skill.

The marking and moderation has been fair and appropriate for Masters/post graduate level; I am in full agreement with the marks.

Points for consideration

This module seems to take on a vast body of knowledge to impart – both court reporting and other media related legislation – and yet there is the issue of Freedom of Information and other information rights, which should be covered somewhere, somehow, though not necessarily in this module.

The latest edition of *McNae's Law for Journalists* is not listed in the student handbook.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my first year as an external examiner for Cardiff, therefore I have no comments to make on this issue.

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

Not yet completed.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

As above.

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	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		N	
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?			N/A
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?			N/A
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?			N/A
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			N/A
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			N/A
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?			N/A
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			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?			N/A
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?			N/A
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			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 & Academic Services, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE