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Sent by email to helen.wheatley@warwick.ac.uk

06 February 2020

Dear Dr Wheatley,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for BA in Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies / Journalism & Culture / Journalism & Communications / Media & Communications.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. There is some excellent vocational preparation being done in the Department (e.g. the new Employability module), and this is complemented by some of the differentiated assessment methods and curriculum innovations in other modules – e.g. Understanding Media Business).
3. Detailed module handbooks with differentiated assessment criteria for all your various assessment methods.
4. It is clear that the JOMEC student is given the skills and confidence to be intellectually curious and ambitious in their research.
5. I was impressed by the quality of feedback given on the module (Understanding Media Business) that used audio feedback. This innovative form of feedback offered the students detail and nuance and a real sense of engagement with their work (and also refreshed the task of marking for the staff involved).



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Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:

1. ***Programme Structure: Differentiation between the three undergraduate programmes.***

These issues principally reflect the young age of the three degrees. Over time, each programme will be developing a stronger individual identity with more visibly unique and non-overlapping features. The examiners' observations about programme distinctiveness/similarity and criteria for including module topics will feed into all future considerations in these two regards.

2. ***Programme Structure: Students' relative lack of training in textual analysis and an aesthetic enquiry into moving image culture was apparent.***

These points will be carried forward into BA boards and borne in mind in relation to the points related to programme and module design. However, the examiners should also be aware that several modules that focus closely on textual analysis did not run last year because of sabbaticals (e.g., Film and Cultural Theory) and new modules are coming online this year which also foreground textual analysis (e.g., Body/Image).

3. ***Programme Structure: Module design and the concept of decolonising the curriculum.***

JOMECE acknowledges the ethico-political impulse towards decolonisation and decoloniality as an ideal. Many JOMECE modules derive directly from the foundational concerns of cultural studies as formulated by the likes of Stuart Hall and the tradition of British Cultural Studies and postcolonial studies, and as such reflect de facto decolonial impulses. However, it is noted that decolonial and feminist (etc) imperatives may not be visibly present in some modules, and this observation will be passed to all programme convenors, BA and PGT in particular.

4. ***Programme Structure: The relationship between critical work and vocational training at JOMECE.***

JOMECE tries annually to establish the best approach to incorporate the perceived need for vocational training, as reflected in our modules, careers fairs, etc. This relationship is reviewed annually.

5. ***The Assessment Process: Grade inflation and a reluctance to award failing grades.***

This observation has been noted and all markers will be encouraged to fail work as and when it is deemed appropriate without wrestling with the idea of a failing grade as a barrier to complete integrity.

6. ***The Assessment Process: Workload for External Examiners and sampling of scripts.***

JOMEC is happy to liaise with examiners in advance of boards to establish how they would prefer to receive samples, documents, and how to approach their reviews of the materials.

7. ***The Assessment Process: Support for students who may struggle to interpret some of the more complex and innovative assignment briefs.***

JOMEC seeks to provide a variety of means of support, from clear assessment instructions, to in class guidance and instruction sessions, to tutorials with lecturers and seminar tutors, a personal tutoring system, a Royal Literary Fellow for writing support, and a post-module feedback system. We are always keen to hear suggestions about how to improve things even more.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme.

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 the University's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

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

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar