



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Ben Cocking		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Kent		
Programme and/or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BA Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-2016	Date of Report:	4 th 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

My understanding is that this is the final year of this programme being structured in the way that it currently is. Whilst the programme is very broad ranging it nonetheless retains a strong sense of coherence. The new degree strands sound very interesting and it was good to hear that they are recruiting very well.

2. Academic Standards

The standard of work I examined this year continues to be exceptionally high, with a small but significant rise in the number of students attaining overall classifications in the 1st and 2.1 bands (with a similar rise last year). The work I have examined at Cardiff is among the very best I have seen in this subject area at undergraduate level.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment strategies for all the modules I examined (in both the Autumn and Spring terms) were very well designed. They clearly test the aims and learning outcomes of each module and are appropriately levelled. Moreover, looking across the modules it is clear that there is a good range of assessment strategies in use.

It was clear to me that the marking process had been conducted in a rigorous and transparent way. Colleagues evidently put a great deal of consideration into marking

work and giving feedback. Overall, the marking was consistent between modules and with the quality of the coursework.

The use of a moderators' letter seems to have been standardised across the modules I looked at. This approach works very well and there were several occasions where there was evidence of dialogue between the first marker and the moderator and this gave a real insight into the serious and rigorous approach to marking taken by colleagues.

Across the modules the quality of feedback was exceptionally good. However, very occasionally there were instances where comments would have benefited from being a little more specific and illustrative. There was also quite some variation in styles of feedback, including on some modules the use of an assessment criteria check list. Clearly, the adoption of one style across all modules might not be appropriate or desirable but it might be worth the team further discussing how modules and assessments relate to one another and considering the best approach to take in each case. As it is, 'feeding forwards' is being practiced on some modules (very successfully) but there may be other occasions when this (or other) approach(es) are most appropriate.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

One of the real strengths of this programme is the excellent range of modules on offer for students. The continuous development of core modules and the practice of evolving specialised modules around staff research interests are excellent. It gives the programme a very contemporary feel and over the last two years the programme has introduced several more practice based modules which clearly students enjoy immensely and really help develop their transferable skills.

It should also be noted that the quality of students' work has continued to improve year on year.

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

N/A.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There is a real commitment to exploring ways of improving and enhancing provision throughout the programme and it seems clear that these practices have continued in the development of the new degree strands.

As with last year, in addition to engaging students with a very broad range of theoretical and analytical perspectives, the programme also includes some very innovative modules that are more 'practice'/employability focused. Such as, MC3602 Social Media Trends. The work that students are producing on these modules is very impressive and they are clearly gaining skills that are very applicable to working in the creative industries.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as external examiner on this programme. The practice of inviting externals to review coursework on site was not something I had encountered at other institutions but it is, in my view, an exemplary approach. Most significantly, it enables external examiners to meet with module convenors and also to discuss observations and practices with the other external examiners. The latter, in particular, is extremely useful as it helps give each external examiner a more rounded overview of the programme and, in terms of quality assurance, ensures that there is consistency between the external examiners.

The new degree strands look very interesting and innovative and colleagues at Cardiff have clearly put a huge amount of work into these developments. They deserve every success.

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?	Y		
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?	N/A		
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
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		
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:

Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE