

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)

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Please complete a separate form for each programme for which you acted as External Examiner. The form should be completed within one month of the Examining Board meeting. *Upon completion please return to Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE (ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).* Arrangements for the payment of fees will be made upon receipt of this form and the associated claim form. Wherever possible please submit the form in word-processed format.

This form may also be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

If there is insufficient space for your comments in any section, please continue on a separate sheet.

Please note that External Examiners' reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. An Institutional Response to any recommendations contained in your report will be forwarded to you during the following academic year. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

PAYMENT OF FEES WILL BE AUTHORISED UPON RECEIPT OF THIS FORM AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM

Name of External Examiner: Professor Martin Conboy

Institution: University of Sheffield

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Programme of study and subject(s) examined: MA Journalism, Media and Communication

Academic Year/Session to which this report applies: 2013/4

Freedom of Information Act

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

SECTION A

1.1 Programme Structure

Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).

This is the third year that the programme has run as MA Journalism, Media and Communication. This renaming has allowed the content of the programme to extend beyond the potential limitations of its previous iteration without sacrificing the strong Journalism Studies core. At eighteen, student numbers have remained very healthy for a course of this type in a very competitive environment. The programme continues to provide a wide and rich context for studying journalism as part of the media and communications industries. It allows students to reflect on the distinctiveness of journalism and the challenges it faces in the contemporary world. 'Governing the Internet' is a very high quality addition to the portfolio and demonstrates both the expertise of the Programme Leader and the directions for growth in the future MA offering of the School. The content of the modules that make up the programme continues to be well rooted within research expertise and there is a very high level of tutor expertise on display. Reading lists are up-to-date and encourage students to engage with the subject area in topical fashion. There was clear guidance within all modules on preparation for the dissertation through reflections on and engagement with research methods. The students are exposed to the best and most contemporary thinking in the field, on the whole, and this is reflected in the work produced. High quality feedback of a formative nature enables students to continue to learn throughout the programme. There is a clear sense of continuity expressed through the tutors' feedback indicating that they all share an understanding of how students should progress.

1.2 Comparability of Standards

Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?

I saw a sample of work from all modules taught. The work produced by the students is of a standard in excess of that characteristic of most UK universities. This reflects the level of live research activity that drives the content of the curriculum and the pedagogic excellence of the staff. There is a blend of varied and challenging modules on a series of modules designed to enable students to explore many of the issues relating to contemporary news media and political communication. There is a range of assessment strategies deployed, allowing students to take slightly different perspectives across the course of their studies. There is a good level of intervention by tutors and a consistently high level of engagement by module submission reviewers or second markers where appropriate. The module 'Putting Research into Practice' continues as an exemplar in the introduction of dissertation work and the work produced on it was in general of a high standard where students had engaged with the content and the workshops.

1.3 The Examination Process

Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.

There were differing strategies for assessment and a good range of work presented as a sample for consideration.

SECTION A (Continued)

1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been actioned?

Yes.

1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

N/A

1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

(i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;

As in previous years there was a good match of learning outcomes with assessment tasks

(ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;

Nothing to add to previous statements which have all been acted upon.

(iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;

Very clear.

(iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme.

The robust and critical internal culture of reviewing marks continues and enhances the quality of the course overall.

1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.

This programme has passed through three sets of hands during my tenure as external examiner. The fact that it has retained such rigour and consistency is a credit to the culture within the School. The quality of delivery and the standard of feedback is demonstration of the highest standards of academic performance and collegiality. This feeds very demonstrably into the quality of the students' written work. All my supportively critical comments have been taken up and acted upon. Standards of communication and administration are very high and make the task of external examining an efficient and even enjoyable experience.

SECTION B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are 'No'.

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>		

2.2 Comments

Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>		

2.7 Comments

Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme's objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?			<input type="checkbox"/>

2.14 Comments

SECTION B (Continued)				
Coursework/Dissertations/Projects		Yes	No	N/A
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?	☐		
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	☐		
2.17 Comments				
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		Yes	No	N/A
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			☐
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?			☐
2.20 Comments				
Examining Board Meeting		Yes	No	N/A
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		☐	
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			☐
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?			☐
2.24	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(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	☐		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?		☐	
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			☐
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			☐
2.28 Comments				
Signed: _____ Martin Conboy _____ Date: _____ 30 June 2014 _____				
Please return with any fee and expenses claim form to: Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE (ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).				