



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Angela Piccini		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Bristol		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc in Science, Media and Communication		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-17	Date of Report:	26 July 2017

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught stage** Examining Board in the case of **postgraduate Master's programmes**).

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

Following the redesign of the MSc this year, I was particularly impressed with the detail of the unit handbooks and methods of teaching and learning. The redesign of the MSc is excellent and the Spring units - especially their diverse assessment events - hang together very coherently. Learning Outcomes are highly appropriate to Aims and the Assessments match the Learning Outcomes and help students to develop their skills. The partnership with Techniquist in the Presenting Science module and involvement of its Deputy CEO in Assessment is to be particularly commended, especially as it is contextualised by the individual reflective analyses. Similarly, the work with Tenovus Cancer charity in the Public Engagement module is very appropriate to the two assessment tasks focused on grant applications. As the grant application assessment event is very academically focused, there is perhaps an opportunity for Public Engagement to have more of a third sector focus in terms of the needs of non-academic partners: public engagement as co-production rather than uni-directional communication of scientific knowledge.

It looks as though this was a challenging and exciting term for the students. The unit handbooks are all very detailed and useful. I do wonder, however, whether a more

consistent 'house style' would help students to navigate through the course. As the MSc is focused on presenting, engagement and visual literacy, might there be an opportunity here to revamp the design of your handbooks? Moreover, where Intro to STS was hugely detailed on a week-by-week basis, Presenting Science was very slim indeed so that it was hard to see what the students did each week.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

The criteria for the course are excellent and the standards of the student work was very good in the main. There were some issues with structure and argumentation that the assessors picked out, but the students all developed ambitious projects that responded well to the aims and objectives of the course. I am very satisfied that the academic standards of the course and individual modules are wholly appropriate to M-level study.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

Introduction to Science & Technology Studies

These appear to be appropriate tasks that are nicely spaced through the unit to allow feedback. The quality of the work submitted overall is satisfactory to very good, although it was disappointing that no students really shone this year. The feedback was fair and consistent, though perhaps harsher than the other 2 units I saw. I would also recommend that the language of the criteria be used more fully in the feedback.

Presenting Science

All of the samples that I have seen demonstrated attainment of learning objectives. The students engaged critically and creatively with the material. The marking was very thorough and thoughtful. Marks and feedback seemed appropriate and it was good to see the full range of marks being used. Feed forward comments were excellent and I hope to see the students using their comments in the dissertation term.

However, I noted in the handbook that the presentations were to be videotaped for the External Examiner to see. I was not sent links to video documentation and would certainly appreciate this in advance of the next Exam Board.

Public Engagement

All of the samples that I have seen demonstrated attainment of learning objectives. The students engaged critically and creatively with the material. The mock grant was particularly good. However, I checked the unit Handbook and couldn't find a more detailed brief for this assignment. I wondered if this was meant to be an application to a UK funding council or a grant for public engagement and/or voluntary sector. In other words, were these academic or professional grants? I ask because the more obviously 'academic' examples received the highest marks, but there is a place for professional writing and I wonder what the teacher assumptions might have been going into the assessment. That said, the marking was very thorough and thoughtful. Marks and feedback seemed appropriate and it was good to see the full range of marks being used. Feed forward comments were excellent and I hope to see the students using their comments in the dissertation term.

Certainly, there is scope for the programme to engage with some of the literature and practices around co-production that have added richness and complexity to ideas of engagement. However, I am satisfied that the standards across the modules are comparable despite their different emphases.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

As the course has changed significantly since the previous academic year, I have no comments to make in comparison with last year's work. However, I would have appreciated being sent updated programme and unit specifications, together with the old programme so that I could compare, contrast and comment.

5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

The involvement of Technquest and Tenovus on the programme is particularly noteworthy and provides excellent added value to the learning experience.

In Public Engagement there are two opportunities to enhance learning. First, and in addition to my comments about the grant application brief, more of the literature from the practitioner side of the debates could be brought in as the module seems firmly focused on academic critique rather than on the potential for co-producing knowledge. Second, the students might find it helpful to have some practical teaching in workshop form to enhance the potential of their presentations. There are a range of innovative engagement methods that might be embedded and assessed within the unit to inform their grant application task. To provide a counter to Presenting Science, given its Technquest focus, and to achieve some more general 'engagement' skills within this module within the constraints of the teaching block, the module leader might consider a 'flipped classroom' approach so that some of the more critical reading and debate happens outside of the classroom in a virtual teaching space so that the face-to-face encounters were focused on skills development.

In Presenting Science, there seems to be a focus on learning innovative presenting styles, but there is not enough detail in the handbook to know how and when these were taught and by what means. This module is well placed to provide the learning needed to move from the grant application mode of Public Engagement to the deliver mode of Presenting. Yet, there's not enough detail available to me for me to comment on how this was achieved.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

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?		x	
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		x	
Draft Examination Question Papers				x
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
Marking Examination Scripts				x
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?			
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	x		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	x		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	x		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	x		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
Sampling of Work				

8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	x		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		x	
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			x
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?			x
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?			
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			
8.30	Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i>			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:
externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

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