

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

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| | For completion by External Examiner: | | |
| Name of External Examiner: | Philip Cooke | | |
| Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner: | University of Strathclyde | | |
| Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report | Italian UG | | |
| Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report: | 2018-2019 | Date of Report: | 03/07/2019 |

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation 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 General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

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

Italian at Cardiff is characterised by an impressively broad and challenging undergraduate curriculum which is designed to equip students with relevant expertise and a range of transferable skills. Students are given the opportunity to acquire expertise in Italian culture broadly conceived – with an emphasis on 20th and 21st century literature and film (taught within an impressive comparative context). Language teaching emphasises high level attainment in the key skills. Teaching methods are innovative and it is clear that students respond positively to their courses. This is my second year at Cardiff and I continue to be very impressed with the curriculum and with the clear interest shown by all members of staff in constantly thinking about the nature of what and how they teach.

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

I have been external examiner at a number of other UK institutions such as Manchester, Leeds, UCL, Bath, Aberdeen, Edinburgh. The standards at Cardiff compare very favourably to these institutions. Overall there were a number of first class degrees and I was very impressed by the quality at the top end. My impression

is that Cardiff students occupy a broad spectrum of achievement. At final year I noted some extremely impressive performances in Italian language, with students showing excellence in writing, translation and oral performance. Cardiff should, if it doesn't already do so, emphasise that its best students graduate with exceptional language skills.

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

All the work I saw was marked very carefully and it was clear that examiners take great care in their assessment. There was plenty of evidence of examiners working together to discuss cases where there was an element of uncertainty.

I noted, as did other externals, that the quality of examination answers was on occasions extremely impressive. This may be related to the strengths of the student cohort, but is most likely related to the high quality teaching that students receive. There is a genuine effort to work with students in order to improve their performance in the stressful environment of the examination hall and this should be commended.

4. Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable) (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

[Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.]

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

I was favourably impressed by all the courses, as I was last year. I note the School offers a number of courses which cut across the various languages taught. This clearly contributes to the genuine feeling that Cardiff ML does operate as a school – not always the case. I would like to pick out one example, among many, of noteworthy practice related to this school ethos – the newly introduced course 'Cultures in Context'. The course is organised around four thematic blocks (Culture + Representation, Identity, Power, Memory). Each block has two introductory lectures given by colleagues from different languages (senior staff in, for example, French, German and Italian). In this way Cardiff's considerable expertise at a theoretical level is pooled and students are thus given access to members of staff they would not otherwise encounter. Equally, students from the range of languages are brought together before returning to their own subject area for language specific tuition.

I felt that the introduction of virtual boards at subject level helped to increase efficiency, but militated against a full discussion between the external and the teaching team. Assuming that virtual boards are here to stay I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the entire teaching team, if only for an hour, on the morning of the second day of the visit.

One of the externals expressed some reservations about grammar exercises appearing in the final year written examination. I agree and wonder whether some thought might be given to an alternative form of assessment.

6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

N/A

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

See my comments on the Cultures in Context course in 5. above. I would also like to flag the very detailed, helpful and patient comments provided by staff involved in language teaching.

At the examination board it was evident that the 'secondary rule', which can assist students whose performance in final year is at first class level, was applied on a number of occasions. I was pleased to hear that students attending progress meetings with staff were made aware of this facility and so encouraged to up their game at a crucial moment in their studies.

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

N/A

9. 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 | | | | |
| 9.1 | Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments? | y | | |
| 9.2 | Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme? | | | N/A |
| Commenting on draft examination question papers | | | | |

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|--|---|---|--|-----|
| 9.3 | Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award? | y | | |
| 9.4 | Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate? | y | | |
| 9.5 | Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments? | y | | |
| Examination scripts | | | | |
| 9.6 | Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent? | Y | | |
| 9.7 | Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | Y | | |
| 9.8 | Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | Y | | |
| 9.9 | Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners? | Y | | |
| 9.10 | 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 | | | | |
| 9.11 | Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate? | Y | | |
| 9.12 | Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments? | Y | | |
| 9.13 | Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate? | Y | | |
| 9.14 | Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work? | Y | | |
| Clinical examinations (if applicable) | | | | |
| 9.15 | Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments? | | | n/a |
| Sampling of work | | | | |
| 9.16 | Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work? | Y | | |
| Examining board meeting | | | | |
| 9.17 | Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting? | Y | | |
| 9.18 | Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction? | Y | | |
| 9.19 | 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) | | | | |
| 9.20 | Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees? | | | n/a |
| 9.21 | If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees? | | | n/a |
| 9.22 | Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules? | | | n/a |

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:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE