



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Helena Boffery		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University College Cork		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Hispanic Studies: BA in Spanish (Spanish language, Catalan language, related Cultural Modules)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	27 June 2013

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

The programme in Hispanic Studies is structured and delivered in such a way as to provide students with an impressive level of competence in the Spanish language alongside the knowledge and tools with which to analyse and understand a wide range of aspects of Hispanic culture, history and society. The course is structured appropriately at each level, moving from an introductory survey module in first year to more specialised options in second and final year, including the opportunity for Single Honours students to write a dissertation on a specialist subject. It also includes attention to the development of relevant professional skills, such as language teaching, translation and interpreting. The changes to the programme that have been proposed over the coming years help to resolve the minor concerns I had with certain aspects of programme delivery, namely the high assessment load on certain language modules.

### 2. Academic Standards

I am happy to confirm that academic standards in the Department of Hispanic Studies are very high. In general, the programme functions effectively, showing excellent individual and collaborative input from all members of the programme team. I was particularly impressed by the standard of language teaching and learning, which resulted in some excellent student achievement across all core skills and competences. Students showed a high level of engagement with all of the different options, suggesting that the suite of modules on offer cater well to student interests

and needs. Furthermore, some of the work produced was of an exceptionally high quality, showing sophisticated engagement with a range of texts, theories and methodologies. There is a currently a good balance between continuous and timed assessments, so I am a little concerned that this balance will be lost with the proposed changes to the programme structure.

### **3. The Assessment Process**

The assessment process ran very smoothly, even though the Department was clearly often under some pressure due to staffing changes during the year. The only incidents that occurred were largely caused by issues with staffing, which in a few minor cases meant there was not enough capacity to ensure that the very robust second-marking and moderation practices in evidence elsewhere in the programme could always be applied. In general, I can report that there are very robust examination and assessment procedures in place, and that marking practice across the Department is both consistent and in line with existing regulations and guidelines. The marks awarded by staff are consistent with the feedback provided and there was strong evidence of second marking on course work and examination scripts. The examination boards all ran very smoothly, showing that there was a good grasp by all of examination and assessment regulations and procedures. Students were treated fairly and with the same degree of care displayed in marking and moderation practice.

### **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

This is my first year as external examiner in Hispanic Studies, so I was glad to have the opportunity to see a full range of course-packs, exam papers and assessments in both semesters. They helped me to get a very good overview of how things work. I referred to the previous external examiner's final report in order to be aware of any outstanding issues, and am happy to report that the concerns he raised about consistency between different types of module appear to have been resolved, in large part because of the great care taken by staff in marking and moderating each others' work.

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

Academic and administrative staff in the Department of Hispanic Studies ensured that I was sent everything I needed in order to perform my role as external examiner. However, I felt that the official documentation was sent rather late in the year to be of much use in preparing for the role.

### **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

There is strong evidence of excellent collaborative work in teaching and learning across the Department of Hispanic Studies, from shared modules such as Politics, Society and Memory in Contemporary Spain, to the careful marking and moderation practice on coursework and exams. The level of care with which staff deal with students and student work clearly gives rise to high levels of progression, particularly in the final year of the programme, in which it was enjoyable to trace students' trajectories across the assessment pieces, often resulting in exceptional performances under examination conditions.

Finally, I was impressed by the clarity of measures introduced to deal with extenuating circumstances, mitigations and students with protected characteristics. I will watch these with interest in future years.

**7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

N/A

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
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		
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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		
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		<b>Yes (Y)</b>	<b>No (N)</b>	<b>N/A (N/A)</b>
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	<b>Y</b>		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	<b>Y</b>		
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?	<b>Y</b>		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?	<b>Y</b>		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	<b>Y</b>		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	<b>Y</b>		

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

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