



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof. Andrew ROTHWELL		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Swansea University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MA in Translation Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	7 July 2015

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 MA is now in a mature form and has not changed significantly in structure this year. It continues to be distinctive in its ability to accommodate students with a very wide range of language combinations.

2. Academic Standards

As in the past, the standards set in work I have seen this year have been fully in line with those in other programmes with which I am familiar. There was, again, a significant amount of outstanding work, but perhaps equally a cause for satisfaction was the very small tail, with virtually all students enabled to reach at least the minimum MA standard on all modules. This is a sign that the programme contents and teaching are well articulated and lecturers are putting a lot of effort (e.g. through extensive feedback) into bringing weaker students up to standard.

3. The Assessment Process

I am happy to repeat my positive comments from last year about detailed and careful marking, and high quality of feedback to students, which is really exemplary. I also noted that, in response to my suggestion last year, a wider range of marks at the upper end of the scale is now being used, with appropriate results and impact on final classifications. The MA board that I attended in late June was efficiently run and the method of treating special circumstances was fully explained.

As in many other HEIs, colleagues in Cardiff are wrestling with the question of how best to do electronic marking and feedback. I was sent samples for moderation which in one case included printouts of essays that had been first marked in Turnitin Gradermark, then annotated on paper by the second marker, which seems largely to negate the intended benefits of the electronic process. Once the various experiments have been worked through, I would recommend that a consistent policy be adopted, for the benefit of staff and students alike.

A related issue is electronic moderation by the external examiner. Largely to overcome constraints in my own timetable, the MA administrator kindly sent me a lot of material that had been scanned. I greatly prefer receiving work for moderation in electronic form, although I appreciate that producing scans in particular is quite laborious, especially from exam booklets. The advantages (speedier communication, no risk of envelopes going astray in the post) are significant enough to be worth pursuing further. My experience with another university has shown that an alternative implementation of electronic marking, Gradebook on Blackboard, can be used to give all assessors including the external access to students' work online, although that system is ponderous in other ways (need to download Word and other documents for reading, then re-upload a commented version). Again, I would be grateful if this question could be considered at the same time as the broader one of electronic marking.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

All of my suggestions relating to **Part 1** from last year's report were implemented by the programme team this year. With respect to the **Dissertation work** from students of the 2013-14 cohort that I saw last autumn, I was pleased to see that a number of suggestions made in my report last year had also been acted upon. In particular, I was sent annotated rather than blind-marked dissertations and ATPs, and the full run of marks was provided. Two other points have only been partially addressed, although I know that the MA team is working on them:

1. I think there is still room for clearer and more explicit **assessment criteria** to be written for the specific ATP exercise, to which assessors would be expected to refer in their comments and grading (see my report from last year).
2. Equally, it would be helpful for a **standard report form** to be devised that reflects the assessment criteria for ATPs, and that it should be completed electronically (ideally, in a shared online environment) and so be available for upload to the external and return to students. Assessors' comments this year were all substantive, in many cases commendably full and detailed, but there still seemed to be a variety of paperwork to which different markers contributed in slightly different ways.

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

N/a

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

I would again commend the design of the practical translation modules, the Training Placement, and the Subtitling module, which give the MA a distinctive professional focus.

I am most grateful to colleagues in the School of Modern Languages for their attentive engagement with my questions throughout the year and their friendly welcome at the boards. I should also like to extend special thanks to the PGT Administrator, [REDACTED], for her highly efficient organisation of the materials sent to me for moderation, including all the scanning she had to do in order to get things to me before I left on a research trip abroad.

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)
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