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Sent by email to [kevin.rafter@dcu.ie](mailto:kevin.rafter@dcu.ie)

**13 March 2020**

Dear Professor Rafter,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19**

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MA in Political Communication.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. There was strong evidence of engagement with the academic literature and real-world issues.
3. Dissertation markers made good use of the grade bands, and written feedback was comprehensive and constructive.
4. The MA Political Communication degree is very well run with very high standards across delivery and assessment.
5. Thanks are expressed to the academic and administrative staff

**Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:**

1. *Continuing concerns about English language standards:*

We continue to encourage students for whom English is not their first language to attend the English Language Programme sessions, and to make the best use of them. We also encourage native speakers to pay



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special attention to the quality of their written English, particularly with regards to typos, grammar glitches, and the inappropriate use of colloquialisms in academic writing. We are advertising widely the academic writing one-to-one support sessions offered by the School's Royal Literary Fellow.

2. *Brexit featured strongly as an assessment topic - to be expected - but it might be worth checking across all the modules to coordinate how the topic is being delivered to avoid duplicating material.*

We have asked all module tutors currently teaching on the course to limit the number of assignments on Brexit. We have also asked module tutors to coordinate whenever they planned to include assignments on Brexit, so that any overlaps are avoided.

In addition to these issues, we would like to thank Prof. Rafter for his work as external examiner for our MA Political Communication. He has always been a fair, considerate, and helpful external examiner, and we all believe that his comments and suggestions have always contributed to improving the practices and standards of our course. We truly believe that thanks to his contribution, our assessment and marking is more robust now than it used to be when he joined as external examiner.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme.

In order to meet the expectations of the [QAA Quality Code](#), both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on the University's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar