

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:	Dr Karen Fowler-Watt		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Bournemouth University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MA International Journalism		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2019/20	Date of Report:	7.7.20

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)

The programme has a clear structure and as a conversion course, builds iteratively on foundational skills in the first tranche of teaching to develop skills in depth and breadth. The inclusion of a relevant suite of options adds to its appeal. The mix of teaching methods and theory/practice blend is also a strength in terms of engaging a broad and international cohort. See below for further comments on theory/practice delivery and the Dissertation. The pathways also offer further opportunities to specialise, which are a strength of the design and structure.

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

The programme is in line with comparative courses at UK HEIs and benchmarking for L7 journalism PGT provision. The moderation is clear and thoughtfully presented. Students are given guidance in feedback on areas for improvement. Formative feedback is used to good effect, as well as summative. The full range of marks is used. The students’ achievements and profiles were also comparable. The students are challenged and stretched on this course and the quality of the work produced is impressive. It is doubly impressive in the Covid-19 context

The previous external examiner has commented on standards for language and for a predominantly international cohort this is always a challenge, which the team clearly engages with and rises to, directing students to proof-read and/or seek further support. I would urge maintaining focus on simplicity and clarity in written work and storytelling as key for journalistic practice. That focus will be even more important with potential pressures on recruitment/IELTS in the next cycle.

I would like to commend the course team and academic support staff on the impressive achievement of getting a large international cohort of PG students through the first two semesters of their studies in a year that has been beset by industrial action and global pandemic. Most progressed and any re-sits were manageable. This is not an easy feat and your students are lucky to have such a committed team supporting them and working to sustain a sense of community in a virtual space.

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

A good range of assessment techniques on the whole, although there is always room to review and consider new approaches year-on-year. Due to lockdown, alternative assessments were set (e.g. Shorthand version for multimedia story) where required and as far as I could tell, these captured the PLOs and the spirit of the module effectively, with adapted feedback sheets. They also allowed for some innovation that might be integrated more permanently into the assessment design.

There is stretch and modules compare favourably in terms of level, learning outcomes and assessment. The students are worked hard on this course, and they complete the programme with a strong set of academic and practical skills. A couple of thoughts on aspects of delivery and assessment/programme design that it would be interesting to discuss with the team further as they consider the future shape and direction of the programme:

Reflections on practice: Great to see this encouraged in reflective writing and embedded within assessment, but many of the submissions were descriptive or 'off the top of the head' reflections rather than framed by theory on reflective practice. I wonder whether this is due to a lack of explicit delivery which could also be written into the module handbooks/teaching schedules/reading lists/ILOs?

Theory/practice blend: This is particularly emphasised in IGA 1 & 2. This year I believe that 2 students have selected the academic dissertation and 78 have opted for practice-based projects for the master's phase. I am thoughtful about the conflation of research methods for academic writing and research for journalism practice. Once I have seen the Dissertations this year, I would be interested to discuss with the team further how this plays out in practice – and particularly for those students not at the top end -- where there might be confusion between academic research methods and journalism practice (e.g. semi-structured interviews are very different to interviews for journalistic storytelling, but a number of students used the terminology interchangeably). I also wonder about ethics, risk assessment etc. More to discuss here and I think a meeting is planned in the coming weeks to start the conversation.

Storytelling: If the modules/delivery mentioned (above) were reviewed, this might create space to teach more on multimedia storytelling and to innovate further – including keeping a beady eye on the externally facing website and digital storytelling, and also:

Ethical and legal context: Cognisant of the challenges of teaching law to an international cohort, there might be an argument for teaching ethics/legal context in a clearly signposted way ahead of the production of major projects. Again, one for review and further discussion once I have seen the final projects. The fake news essay goes some way here and engages the student in thinking about verification etc.

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

n/a for this report, this year.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

This is my first year as EE for MAIJ, but I have reviewed the previous Externals comments in previous reports and noted the emphasis on language and journalism/storytelling (above). I would echo these but feel that the focus is there now on language (notwithstanding future potential pressures and challenges) and that students are referred for additional support where necessary.

In addition to the comments (above) re: storytelling, theory/practice blend. Ethics and legal context and reflective practice:

Technical quality (broadcast): I was very impressed with the technical quality in video and audio across the board, even in the weaker assignments that I looked at. Likewise, in documentary production. This is a real strength of the journalism practice elements of the course and a testament to the teaching of these skills. I hope it will be maintained.

Options, visiting speakers and civic engagement: all areas of strength. Would be great to see as many master classes and visiting speakers (as evident in FNR) as possible, but I am sure there is much more going on in wider JOMEC setting that MAIJ students can also engage with. In *the Editor's Chair* and *Communicating Causes, Emerging Journalism* all engage with real-world impactful projects and some best practice in terms of innovation and transferable skills here, such as leadership, teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, industry engagement.

Global context, voice, inclusive journalism: The course could engage with these themes in even more depth (see note on reflective practice) – particularly as an international journalism course with an international mix of students - but might need to clear some space to do so.

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)

This is my first year as EE for this programme and I would like to thank the programme team and academic support team for organising all the materials for me ahead of the board with such efficiency. All supporting materials as well as assignments and a range of samples were easily available to me. Just to note that those modules where materials were available in the External Examiner space on the VLE, were much easier to scrutinise and to find my way around. I was able to visit the School prior to lockdown for the Future of Journalism conference, when my appointment was in the works, so have a good sense of the working environment and the team. I look forward to visiting in the 'post Covid' world and to meeting students – and more of the team. - in future.

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

This is a really good course with many strengths! I would highlight:

- i. Peer-to-peer learning evident in group work and cohort-building. This is impressive in a large international student cohort and a testament to the team and the design of units. The response to the move to online and the Covid-19 context shows agility and real care for students – both as learners and as human beings. This is to be commended.

- li. The delivery of transferable skills and 'intangibles' in the suite of options, notably *In the Editor's Chair* and *Communicating Causes, Emerging Journalism* –'real world' assessment and experience, engagement with industry and the wider community. Also, away days for dissertation proposal preparation, which run across the PGT programmes in JOMEC.
- lii. The level of student achievement in technical skills across all platforms and evidence of a strong multimedia mindset/flexibility and agility. This can be built on as a strength, I think.
- Iv. Feedback and guidance for improvement/moderation amongst the team which also conveys a strong team spirit and collegiality. This underpins point i) (above).

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	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
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?			N/A
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
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	Y		

	established procedures and to your satisfaction?			
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	
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

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