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**Sent by email to [Eoghan.mortell@workingword.co.uk](mailto:Eoghan.mortell@workingword.co.uk) 19 December 2016**

Dear Mr Mortell,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2015–2016**

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MA in International Public Relations and Global Communications Management .

Your Report has been considered by the School in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

**Issues Highlighted**

1. Assessment of core traditional skills such as news development and press release writing.
2. Assessment of teamwork activity to reflect the contribution of all members of the team concerned and not just the role of dominant individuals.
3. Whether the multi-platform component of the IPR theory module should be assessed rather than non-assessed, given that it contains such fundamental operational skills.

**The following response has been provided on behalf of the School:**

1. In relation to the traditional skills of public relations practice, the School ensures that many elements of those skills are built into the range of assessments across IPR Theory, Practice and Global Communications

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Management in terms of pitching, designing and building campaigns, writing press releases and team work. The School realises the importance of these skills and therefore add in additional practice based work in the form of multi-platform writing, practice based workshops and guest speakers. Traditional skills are therefore built into both the assessed and non-assessed parts of the programme.

2. The teaching team build in a traffic light system to support the students if and when issues arise. A discretionary 10% addition/reduction is then allowed in grade allocation to individuals within the grading system. The School cannot guarantee the grades reflect the efforts of all the members of the group but do make it clear that, if group members are unhappy with the team direction and individual effort, they can discuss this with the module tutors. This assessment format is used to reflect the working practices of working in team environments.
3. The lack of assessment for multi-platform writing sessions is due to the fact that this is built into the assessment for the IPR Practice module where the students are required to write a press release and a communications campaign. The School views these sessions as essential and support the assessed work in IPR Practice.

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

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. valuable emphasis within the course on digital communications skills which reflects the increasing importance of online platforms in PR programmes, particularly international campaigns which cross many borders;
3. Module Handbooks highlighting learning outcomes and associated employability skills;
4. early introduction of research skills in the Programme;
5. regular opportunities to hear speakers from industry in order for students to get valuable and current insights into how their new learning can be applied in a modern workplace;
6. strong focus on digital communications skills; particularly the requirement to deliver real world campaigns for real 'clients';
7. supportive and committed Programme Team willing to adapt to the differing needs of students from multiple different countries.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we 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 website and will be available to all students and staff.

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The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar