



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:	BA in Translation		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-14	Date of Report:	28 June 2014

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

This is a recent programme, with its first small cohort reaching final year stage in 2013-14. Since it is a variant of a standard Modern Languages BA programme, I saw modules corresponding to only part of the students' degree, but I am happy to confirm that the programme as a whole seems to me well constructed to deliver a valuable mix of linguistic and professional skills.

2. Academic Standards

The standards set in work I have seen this year have been high, and fully in line with both QAA descriptors for work at this level, and the standards of comparable programmes with which I have been involved as external examiner over the years.

3. The Assessment Process

As I said last year, forms of assessment on this degree are varied, imaginative and professionally relevant. The assessment process itself is carried out rigorously, with very extensive comments and feedback to students (including in some cases I saw on exam scripts, which I suspect the students never see). This degree of detailed engagement and dialogue with students' writing is highly commendable, and should significantly enhance their subject learning and general academic development. I do however have a number of recommendations for improvement:

1. As mentioned in my report last year with respect to one module, I did however find a considerable reluctance, this time more or less across the board, to reward excellent performances with high marks. At the top end, there is often a discrepancy between the marker's summary comment and the mark awarded – one example I found was: 'Very good answer, with all important aspects for and against included', which seems to imply a comprehensive answer with no major flaws, but the mark awarded was 70%. It seems to me that assessors are marking with out-of-date assumptions about the First Class threshold being all that matters, yet in your averages-driven system it is very hard to achieve a First when the highest mark achievable on a module is in practice 72 or 75. I would therefore strongly recommend that assessors be encouraged to use the full range of marks at the top end, up to and beyond 90 (in the rare cases that merit it). To that end, I would suggest that module-specific achievement descriptors be drawn up for bands of marks at the top end (e.g. 70-75, 76-80 etc.) which would guide assessors in awarding those marks, and in discussing among themselves and with external examiners which mark is appropriate.

2. A related point: your commendably clear secondary rule for classification of borderline degrees means that the class of individual modules is potentially important. I would therefore strongly recommend looking at all module marks ending in 9 in advance of the departmental exams board, to see whether they might be raised to the class above.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

I commented last year that the top (marked) copy of essays was returned to students and was therefore unavailable for me to see. This did not happen this year.

I also remarked on a constriction of marks at the top end in one module. As already mentioned in 3 (above), I found this to be a more pervasive problem in the current session.

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

N/a.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

I commended EU2298 Introduction to Specialised Translation last year as being very well designed for Translation students in the second year, and I would extend this commendation in the current session to the suite of specialised translation modules for finalists, as well as 'Translation as a Profession', which is very up to date and professionally relevant. A lot of creative thinking and professional skill and knowledge has gone into devising these exemplary modules, from which students derive both academic and vocational benefit.

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?	Y		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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