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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Jason Danelly		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Oxford Brookes University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Japanese		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-19	Date of Report:	26/06/19

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 curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to provide a continuity between modules and years and to guide students along a gradual development and mastery of key knowledge, skills and abilities in line with the program objectives. While some of the content has differed from previous years, with less emphasis on business-related source material and more on history, the level of instruction and expectations meet the appropriate level and high standards for similar programs.

Students not only learn language alongside modules on past and present culture and society, but the module content is designed to provide chances for a more blended experience. The topics of study in the language modules, such as women's roles in the workplace or children's education, introduce students to social issues, while the more advanced module, Memory and Symbols provided further flexibility for students who wished to write commentaries on original translations of historical source material. Recent changes in module structure have shifted weightings of assessed coursework toward a more balanced approach, although exams remain the largest single piece of assessed work for language modules. The portfolio assignments and variety of coursework provide ample opportunities for students to receive formative feedback and track development over the year. The structure allows for increasing ability to specialise in both research topic and output format.

This new structure and weighting of assignments is fairly balanced with written and oral/interview coursework, however, exams may have to be adjusted slightly to account for the 1.5 hr. time limit. Some students may have been able to achieve higher marks with additional time in the advanced module or the components of the exam could be shortened.

In past years I was very impressed with the dissertations, but this year, students were able to choose this as an option. Only one dissertation was submitted, but it was an excellent piece of work demonstrating careful and critical understanding of sensitive issues of violence, memory, recovery and narrative in the context of memorializing the WWII bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is impressive that Japanese has been able to continue to deliver their programme and achieve such high standards when vital staff have left or taken extended leave. This has put this excellent program in a very difficult position and I think it is essential that more stability is brought to program with more full-time staff, ideally permanent.

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

Academic standards are comparable to other UK HEIs, providing further opportunities for students of advanced ability to undertake more challenging work. The extension of the advanced Japanese module from 30 to 60 credits has further improved the chances for students who only spent half a year abroad to achieve excellent proficiency at completion of the programme. Overall achievement of students is excellent. Students demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to a variety of topics using various sentence structures and idioms. The work shows an ability to compose thoughtful and critical essays on social, cultural and political aspects of Japanese culture. There has been a slight improvement of marks compared to previous years, when there were fewer outstanding students. This is a positive development that shows the effectiveness of the coursework and the staff's responsiveness to students' needs.

Good overall spread of marks for assignments, although firsts tend to only be very low firsts. Due to the weighting, this might result in students getting firsts on several pieces of coursework but a 2-1 overall. I encourage the use of the full range of marks within reasonable limits.

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

The assessment across the course is excellent. The learning outcomes and assessment guidelines are clear and transparent. Year 2 and 4 exams follow a similar structure with an appropriate increase in difficulty between intermediate and advanced level. I was not able to examine most of the coursework itself, but was happy to see that there were many assessments throughout that provided formative feedback. Student achievement on these various assessments was not always consistent (a student who did well on their interview, for example, may have done poorly on the written exam) but the overall result was a fair distribution of marks. Detailed rubrics are used consistently throughout most of the modules and in online feedback. In the free written feedback there was less consistency. Some essays

were given sensitive, detailed and constructive comments on each essay. In other cases, however, essays received only brief generic comments that students find less useful. Rather than simply commenting that something is just 'confusing' or 'too short', for example, small, specific suggestions for improvements should be included when possible. Some students appear to be doing poorly on essays not due to knowledge and argument but rather organization and mechanics (i.e. citations and referencing). While these are important skills in HE, it is my opinion that if coursework continues to give these aspects so much weight, there ought to be additional preparation in year 1 and clearer notice to students to double-check these points.

Module moderation reports were very useful and detailed and showed a high level of rigor and discernment. Changes made as a result of moderation were well documented.

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

*[Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.]*

n/a

**5. Year-on-Year Comments**

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

As in previous year, I encourage the use of constructive comments in student feedback for significant assessments such as the year-abroad essay and year 4 essays. There has been improvement in this area and it would be enhanced if attention was taken to apply best practices uniformly across modules/semesters.

I am very satisfied with the response to all other points raised in the previous report.

**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)

All arrangements were excellent.

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

This program is very well structured, providing a strong foundation in the first years, followed by opportunities to specialize in the last years. The variety of coursework and the more balanced weighting encourages students to develop a range of skills. While the year abroad assignment gives alternate format options such as videos, students did not take up this opportunity, perhaps feeling that they lacked the

support. I feel the program might be greatly enhanced if these kinds of alternate format assessments were encouraged even more.

Memory and Symbols was a welcome addition to the program, as it clearly demonstrates the strength of research-led teaching. The variety of assessments seemed to bring out the best in each student, and some of the work was outstanding.

**8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)** (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course information</b>				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	X		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	X		
<b>Commenting on draft examination question papers</b>				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	X		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	X		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	X		
<b>Examination scripts</b>				
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?	X		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	X		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	X		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	X		
<b>Coursework and practical assessments</b>				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	X		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	X		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	X		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
<b>Clinical examinations (if applicable)</b>				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			X
<b>Sampling of work</b>				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	X		
<b>Examining board meeting</b>				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with	X		

	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?	X		
<b>Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)</b>				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?		X	
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			X
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			X

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[externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk)

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