

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: | Gauti Sigthorsson | | |
| Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner: | University of Roehampton | | |
| Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report | BA Journalism and Communications BA Media and Communications BA Media, Journalism and Culture | | |
| Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report: | 2018-19 | Date of Report: | 26 June 2019 |

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)

Curriculum design shows impressive engagement with contemporary issues in media, communications and journalism, reflected in the reading lists and topics for individual lectures/seminars. This also applies to the methods (e.g., content analysis, ethnography) and data sources (e.g., the use of open data in Data Journalism).

Methods of learning and teaching reflect the range of the curriculum itself, with conventional lectures and seminars complemented by student-led seminars, presentations, and workshops.

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

The work reviewed was of a standard commensurate with what I have seen at other UK HEIs. I saw no marks that I would disagree with when looking at samples of student work and the feedback provided by staff.

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

I was pleased to see moderation reports provided for each assessment in a module, presented in a consistent format across the different modules. While the reports sometimes noted divergent views of markers, the tone was collegial and the comments usually constructive. These reports also made it easier to see the standards between modules at each level, and to get a sense of what the shared expectations of the team were for student performance, marking and feedback at different levels.

There is a good variety of assessments across modules, ranging from conventional written work to more “hands-on” practice-oriented assessments (see sec. 7 below). The quality of the student work reviewed raised the question for me whether the practice-oriented assessments could have more weight in some modules where they stood out as particularly relevant. The team may want to consider, for example, whether an essay the most appropriate assessment for 60% of the learning outcomes for Data Journalism, rather than the data visualisation – a brief that seemed to stretch the students in ways not seen elsewhere.

Assessment briefs for students differ markedly between different modules, in format, guidance for students, and in how assessment criteria are laid out. Some assessment briefs demonstrate innovative good practice, for example in Feminist TV Histories, staff provided accessible “tips” to students for how to write and present their work. I suggest that the team consider whether it would be beneficial to present assessment briefs more consistently between modules.

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](#).]

Not applicable, as this is my first year in post.

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)

Module documentation and samples were shared in hardcopy in a dedicated seminar room on campus. I found this to be a very good way to carve out time for me to engage with the material in some depth. In future, I would be happy to view the work electronically or in hardcopy as appropriate, so long as the format of the visit is kept as it is.

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

I found innovative practice in most of the modules reviewed. In particular, some assessments challenge the students to exercise their creativity and to engage with the subject from a fresh perspective. Notable examples, out of the selection of modules that I reviewed this time, are: The use of open data as raw material for a data visualisation (Data Journalism). Pitches for projects aimed at a particular cultural institution and its needs – in this case the National Museum of Wales (Immersive Media). Campaign plan for enhancing the profile of a particular celebrity, asking the students to put theories of celebrity into practice (Celebrity Culture). These “hands on” assessments encourage students to stretch their creative abilities, and gain confidence in the use of presentation formats beyond conventional academic writing.

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 | |
| 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? | Y | | |
| 9.7 | Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate? | Y | | |
| 9.8 | Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | Y | | |
| 9.9 | Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners? | Y | | |
| 9.10 | 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 | | | | |
| 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? | | | |
| 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 | | |

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|--|---|---|---|-----|
| 9.18 | Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction? | Y | | |
| 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

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE