



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof Lorenzo Chiesa		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Kent		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Italian		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	12 October 2013

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

I can confirm what I reported last year. I believe that the structure and content of the programme are appropriate and well balanced. A wide range of subjects are taught by the Italian department. Topics treated in the modules are of high interest and often innovative. In this regard, last year I singled out modules which are more openly related to staff's research interests. This year, I was also positively impressed by EU7340, a module based on Learning Portfolios, which actively encourages students to undertake individual research.

2. Academic Standards

The standards set for the programme are appropriate for qualifications at this level and in this subject.

The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions.

The students have demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard.

3. The Assessment Process

The process for assessment, examination and determination of awards seemed fairly conducted and within institutional regulations. With regard to the balance of the assessment methods, the specifications of the modules I was given to examine indicate that this is appropriate. The marking method is overall rigorous and assessment criteria are applied fairly. Students receive detailed comments and feedback.

I had some queries and requests for clarification concerning the double-marking system being adopted, which were answered promptly by the Chief Examiner.

There are, however, some specific issues that need to be tackled, as I have communicated to the Chief Examiner. These include:

- 1) Great disparity of marks between different questions (even among exams that were awarded a First) in the case of one Italian Language exam
- 2) Some inconsistency in feedback in the case of one content module; the same marks were commented by marker(s) rather differently (e.g. mark of 70 accompanied at times by comments such as 'good analysis etc', at others by a more puzzling 'OK, not bad...')
- 3) Highly divergent marks in one content module co-taught with colleagues from other departments. I would encourage colleagues from Italian to discuss with colleagues from other departments ways to avoid this. Such a divergence of marks (at times of 20+ points) does not seem to apply to modules marked within the department and is likely to be caused by different marking methods adopted by different departments. With regard to this same content module, I also wondered why there was no essay title focusing on Italian texts.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

In my previous report, which was also by and large positive, I evidenced three fronts of possible improvement concerning the External Examiner's participation in the assessment process:

- a) including orals in sample to be examined by external
- b) briefing external about arrangements in place for the year abroad and related assessment criteria
- c) scanning scripts and sending them as email attachments

I have to lament the fact that none of these points was addressed effectively. With specific regard to the third, upon receiving the initial batch of first term exams by post I suggested to the Chief Examiner that an easy alternative would have been uploading scripts to Sharepoint. To the best of my knowledge, the Chief Examiner tried to implement this over the following months but due to staffing shortages in the IT department this was eventually not accomplished. It is worth noticing that some

exams sent by post reached me too late for me to be able to review them.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Colleagues in Italian rightly give significant importance to the Dissertation module. The high quality of the dissertations I have read witness to their good practice and careful supervision.

As discussed with the Chief Examiner, I wonder whether in the future it would be possible to allow students to write their dissertation in English. In my opinion, the Dissertation module should prioritise the students' research skills – it is usually the longest essay they write for their BA. Language skills are already thoroughly tested in language modules.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I can only reiterate my overall appreciation for the good work carried out by colleagues from the Italian department at Cardiff during these two years. There remain some issues to be tackled and solved (see 4 above), but I understand that relatively minor problems can become insurmountable when academics are not provided adequate administrative support.

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?	Yes		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	N/A		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Yes		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Yes		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Yes		
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?	Yes		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Yes		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Yes, but see 3. above		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Yes, but see 3. above		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Yes		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Yes		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Yes		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Yes		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Yes, but see 3. above		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Not always, see 4. above		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	No		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	N/A		
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?	N/A		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?	No		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	N/A		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	N/A		

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