EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Alison Gow		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Trinity Mirror		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Digital Journalism module *MA/PG Diploma in Journalism*		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013/14	Date of Report:	20/08/14

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

Students were required to undertake a community project and a feature to demonstrate how they applied their learnings to develop online and real-world communities around a chosen topic.

They were required to employ the use of multimedia techniques and social media platforms to develop communities and build their personal brands, and the Wordpress platform they blogged on as a brand.

The feature article, on a chosen topic within their community project sphere, had to demonstrate excellent journalism and writing skills, and multimedia tools such as video, audio, or social tools.

This requirement showcased not only ability to interrogate data and source facts, along with writing and grammar skills, but also the storytelling abilities of each candidate.

The digital journalism module is especially relevant in demonstrating skills to potential employers – both the community and feature projects show how the journalist in question is able (or not!) to connect with audiences, use social media to source stories or develop themes, develop a personal brand and respond to audience preferences or criticisms.

The community project is particularly relevant as those students who adapted their work and tailored content according to audience response were more successful. At least one candidate has, from my perspective, created the beginnings of a viable business opportunity on their Wordpress platform. I believe this underlines how well the module encourages initiative and how to develop content in response to audience needs.

I noted most of the students I was asked to assess have discontinued their community project now the course is complete, which is a shame as maintaining their ideas and continuing to grow a thriving, lively platform, would only help them on the road to employment.

2. Academic Standards
Generally good academic standards across the sample work I received.

3. The Assessment Process
There was obviously a rigorous and supportive assessment process in place with considered feedback and suggestions for changes of approach, or tweaks in tone and content.

Some students obviously had not approached their projects with the dedication and thought necessary for success – from the feedback it was clear they had been made fully aware of the deficiencies and advised on steps to remedy this, with on-going support.

There was also an instance of a student relying heavily on reproducing others' existing work without correct referencing; this was discovered and handled with transparency and clarity, but also with sensitivity.

4. Year-on-Year Comments
This is my second year as an external examiner. Year-on-year I would say that while the 20/13/14 standards were good, some of the sample work I received showed less ambition and purpose. There were standout candidates who demonstrated an ability to run build audiences, produce excellent journalism and run projects with an eye to longevity but some of the topics persisted with (for example, beauty blogs) lacked scope.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement
As with last year, I can only reiterate that the digital journalism module really does equip students with a toolkit that employers require – whether their career ambitions lie in mainstream media or elsewhere.
Layered with sound journalism skills, the multimedia and audience skills developed through this module should be invaluable for those looking to enter traditional newsrooms. Candidates with an eye to developing their own entrepreneurial or brand journalism careers can set these in motion via the community project.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?		N	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		N	
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?	Y		
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?	**N/A**		
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