

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MA in Translation Studies

Dear Professor Rothwell,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of European Languages, Translation and Politics in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

[1, second para] **The programme contents are organised according to two main strands: (1) theoretical/cultural/literary and (2) professional/specialised, corresponding respectively to an 'academic' and a 'training' pathway. This is in line with the MA's twin objectives of providing both a rigorous preparation for PhD work in Translation Studies, and a recognised entry point into the translation professions. My sense, after my first year of involvement with the programme, is that it achieves both these objectives quite successfully. However, it does appear to me that the 'academic' pathway (1) is perhaps a little dominant, and I would suggest that the programme team consider whether a little more flexibility of choice for students might help it to cater even more effectively for those primarily interested in pathway (2), and re-balance the programme slightly.**

"In keeping with your suggestions, we have lessened the number of compulsory modules (students now take only EUT401 – Translation Theory and EUT076 – Translation Methods and Skills as compulsory as EUT402 All Languages Translation Class has been dropped) and given students a free choice from the remaining optional modules. They are no longer required to take a cultural module as well as specialised translation modules and may, should they wish to do so, take entirely specialised translation modules. These changes have all been checked and executively approved by the head of PGT."

[1, third para] **Finally, I would suggest a minor change to the syllabus of the foundational module EUT401 Theory of Translation, which at the moment concentrates on cultural/literary theories, to add one or more sessions on pragmatic Functionalist approaches (Skopos, text typologies etc.), which arguably have more professional application. This would also allow the introduction of some aspects of skopos, translation commission etc. into the exercises for the Specialised Translation modules.**

"This module has been redesigned to accommodate your suggestion here. A Functionalist session has been added."

[4.1] **It is easier to make essays and other electronically-originated work available online, via Blackboard, Dropbox etc., but for this to be useful it would need to have been assessed electronically as well. I would strongly recommend a move to this as standard practice, not just for the convenience of the external examiner, but because students receive more complete and timely feedback.**

"We are discussing implementing a trial whereby two modules are electronically marked this year as a means to moving towards this. We are keen to make this

move but the range of lecturers and tutors involved, both internal and external, and the need to train them in these marking processes means that this move is likely to be a gradual one for the MA.”

[6] EUT413 Training Placement seems to me an innovative and highly valuable module, acting as a bridge between academia and professional practice and enhancing student employability. I do wonder however whether 35 hours is long enough.

“We are reviewing this placement module over the course of the coming year both with a view to considering the extension of our range of employers and the format of its assessment. We will, with your permission, add the length of the placement to the discussions to be had. It is currently designed to harmonise with the contact hours of other modules with the same credit weighting as this particular module.”

Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School’s provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;**
- b. **[2] your report of and commendation of “highly skilled and committed teaching”;**
- c. **[6] the range and nature of noteworthy practice including “excellent organisational work” and the innovative design of practical design and training placement modules.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

In order to meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on Registry web pages and will be available publically.

The University’s provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Mrs Jill Bedford
Director of Registry and Academic Services