



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Liz Yeomans, SHEA		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Leeds Beckett University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MA International Public Relations and Global Communication Management		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-2015	Date of Report:	30 July 2015

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

The programme is structured to provide a very good balance of theoretical and practical modules in relation to the principal aims of the course stated on the university website. The course director and team continuously review the programme to ensure currency with theoretical and PR practice developments and ensure that these developments are reflected in the curricula through relevant updates. As a recognised course of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the programme incorporates a large proportion of the recommended syllabus elements both conceptually (e.g. PR ethics; media law) and practically (e.g. press release writing).

In my first report (2011-2012) I commented that the overall programme learning outcomes, as well as aims, should be explicitly stated in the programme specification in the course handbook so that they can be mapped against specific module learning outcomes. This work is still to be done. I would also recommend that given the necessary updates in module content over the past few years (reflecting developments in theory and practice) that overall programme learning outcomes and specific module learning outcomes are reviewed holistically at an appropriate time in order to capture these changes and to rationalise specific module learning outcomes where appropriate.

## **2. Academic Standards**

As stated in my report of the past four years, the standards compare very favourably and could be said to exceed standards at other institutions, in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable benchmark statements. It is evident that students are progressively developed throughout the programme so that they are able to meet some of the more challenging learning outcomes set in both individual work and group projects in semester 2 and in the Dissertation.

Some of the work that I have sampled successfully demonstrate national masters level outcomes 'evaluate critically current research in the discipline' and 'deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively' (QAA, 2008, p. 21). Several individual students and student groups produced outstanding work this year and were deservedly awarded Distinction grades at the highest levels. I very much look forward to seeing the dissertations arising from this cohort later in the year.

## **3. The Assessment Process**

Overall, the assessment is well-designed and applied and student achievement is measured fairly against the intended learning outcomes of each module. The assessment methods are appropriate for a vocationally-orientated postgraduate programme. Students are wholly assessed by coursework: typically essays, project reports or proposals and presentations. A dissertation is submitted at the end of the programme. Assessment methods continue to demonstrate an excellent balance of traditional (e.g. essays) and applied assignments (e.g. PR projects).

The volume of assessed components is still, in my view, too many in relation to the number of credits awarded, specifically in International PR Theory and International PR Practice. Over the past year, steps have been taken to reduce some of the assessed components. However, staff are confident that the students welcome the challenge of these two modules.

The assessment criteria, marking schemes and award classifications are generally set at the appropriate level. The level of written feedback on coursework submissions and summative notes is mostly detailed and constructive, identifying strengths and weaknesses, while enabling learners to improve their future efforts where relevant.

## **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

Last year I commented on the volume of assessment and am satisfied that the course team are responding to this by reducing assessed components, while continuing to review the programme and workload. See 3 above.

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

## **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

1. Excellent individual and group assignment briefs, presenting students with a range of contemporaneous issues related to different sectors (corporate, NGO, public). Outstanding work was underpinned by strong research, creativity and execution in the practical work. In essays, work of the highest quality demonstrated students' abilities to critically evaluate literature and present compelling, well-evidenced arguments in relation to specific topics and questions.
2. Fully anonymous marking across all modules. This works particularly well for submitted written work such as individual essays and reports.
3. Extensive Research Methods (40 credits) underpinning informs the development of other projects, not purely the Dissertation.
4. Extensive and constructive feedback on the larger projects in particular.
5. Very good mix of academic knowledge and skills are developed, combined with vocational skills including digital communication management and campaign analytics.
6. Numerous enhancement opportunities including the guest speaker programme and specific workshops such as media training. The Course Director has included more workshops this year to enhance employability.
7. Dedicated and enthusiastic team who are highly responsive to students' interests and employability potential.

## **7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

It has been a privilege to be an examiner on this course and to see it go from strength to strength. This is an excellent course which prepares graduates very well for employment and further study/research in international public relations and global communication management. It very well led and supported by team members who contribute a diverse range of expertise and knowledge in the field. The dedication and commitment of the course director and the team to relevance/currency of curriculum content as well student achievement across a large cohort is evident in all the work that I have sampled over the past four years. It is pleasing to see the course team members recognised by the students in their nominations for teaching awards. As I have remarked above, given the various changes to the curriculum, including a greater focus on digital developments, there is scope to take stock, review holistically the programme learning outcomes in relation to module learning outcomes and that teaching, learning and assessment strategies are carefully aligned to these as a safeguard against over-assessment and to ensure continuing depth and breadth of learning.

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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	
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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?			N/A
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		<b>Yes (Y)</b>	<b>No (N)</b>	<b>N/A (N/A)</b>
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?		<b>N</b>	
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			<b>N/A</b>
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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			<b>N/A</b>

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto: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