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Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Jen Birks		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Nottingham		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MA Journalism, Media and Communication		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018/19	Date of Report:	09/07/19

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)

Overall, this is a strong programme, with a coherent set of modules that complement one another with little overlap, and that produced some original work that was a pleasure to read.

The method of teaching is predominantly lecture-based because of the large numbers of students recruited on the programme and others that share modules with it, but staff work hard against the limitations of this form of delivery (see 7. below)

It's clear from the assessed work that the students have engaged enthusiastically with the teaching, and the questions have enabled students – international students in particular – to reflect on media and communication in their own countries in comparative context.

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

Standards are consistent with those at other institutions, and with FHEQ guidelines, requiring not only understanding but originality and insight. This is particularly effectively assessed through research-based assignments in several modules.

In common with other institutions, there are clearly some language difficulties among some international students, despite robust IELTS entry requirements, and it would be good to see direction to university language support services.

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

The assessments were appropriately stretching, connected to intended learning outcomes, and assessed by clear criteria. Marking is broadly consistent; feedback is generally detailed, specific and constructive, a standard which is impressive to maintain with such a large cohort. It's good to see that there is equally detailed feedback on the distinction level work as the lower grades and fails, allowing students to learn from their successes as much as their failures.

There could be a more consistent approach to the word-counts for assessment – either as a range, percentage leeway or maximum. Students would also likely appreciate having assessment deadlines staggered where possible, though the questions and briefs are available in the module outlines which does enable them to exercise time management skills.

Evidence of moderation was not made available to me, but the policy in the guide of markers is not best practice. Moderation is an oversight on the quality and consistency of marking, and is distinct from the practice of second marking. When only a sample of work is viewed, individual marks should not be changed, as this is inequitable. If marks need to be adjusted because they are consistently too high or low, this should be applied to the whole set of marks. If a wider problem is detected, second marking should be applied to the whole set of marks.

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.]

A strong set of work that reflects well on what students have learned on their course. The sample I saw almost all managed to identify a coherent and achievable project, based in an understanding of relevant theoretical issues – some more original than others but all meeting the appropriate standard.

It is particularly striking that students have clearly benefited from the rigorous methods training, as well as the use of mini-research project assignments in some content modules. The best work I saw was very impressive indeed, very sophisticated in its analysis and well-deserving of the high mark awarded.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

Following Dr Higgins' comments from last year, there are still one or two modules that give rather less detail in the module handbooks than others, but generally there is good consistency in content despite variation in presentation.

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)

I was given very clear and useful information about late penalties, progression rules and resit opportunities. It would have been useful, in retrospect, to have had more information about the structure of the degree, such as credit weighting and which modules are 'required' and which therefore may be 'condoned'.

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

Some module leaders have put in extra time to support students with formative assessment and unscheduled class tests on the reading, which help to support students' learning and incentivise engagement, getting them into good habits early on.

In the larger classes in particular, staff have worked hard to incorporate interactivity within lectures and to use workshop formats where practicable and most suitable (e.g. research methods).

#]In-class evaluations of specific aspects of the module, in addition to the generic online evaluation, are an excellent way to inform development of teaching practice in a reflective and evidence-based way.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

Not applicable

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?	X		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		X	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			X
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			X
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			X
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?			X
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			X
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			X
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			X
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			X
Coursework and practical assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	X		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	X		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	X		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			X
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	X		
Examining board meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	X		
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?	X		
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?			X
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			X
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			X

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