

Academic & Student Support Services
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Simon Wright LLB



Sent by email to ethorsen@bournemouth.ac.uk

17 August 2015

Dear Dr Thorsen,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2014 – 2015

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MA in Journalism, Media and Communications.

Your Report has been considered by the School 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.

Issue(s) Highlighted:

1. The lack of modules reflecting on Welsh media, from a national or local perspective;
2. Consideration of standardising the presentation of information in module handbooks so student experience of the material is consistent;
3. In some examples, feedback was very brief and this should be considered to ensure consistency across the programme;
4. The presence of second marker comments on one or two of the feedback sheets;
5. It is not clear how "participation" is assessed in MCT493 (Introduction to Journalism Studies) and MCT503 (Mediatised Conflict: The Politics of Conflict Reporting), where it accounts for 10% in both instances;
6. The inconsistencies in assignment weighting and word count across modules;
7. Consideration of online marking and feedback for assignment submission.

The following response has been provided on behalf of the School:

1. Although we appreciate the relevance of a Welsh media module at a university based in Wales, this particular MA programme is very international in outlook and in terms of the student body and Welsh media may not sustain enough interest to be a central focus in any of the modules, and this might also explain why this was not discussed in the sample of assignments. However, the core module Politics of Global Communication does include references and discussion of non-English language news media, here particularly with regards to Chinese news media (also partly due to the large proportions of students on the programme who come from China who regularly contribute with examples of their own news media) as well as Spanish

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language news media from Latin America (and the news network Telesur) as well as Arabic news (and the news network Al-Jazeera). However, there is certainly scope to include more focus on non-English (and non-Western) media in this module.

2. Presentation and style of the handbook for each module is to the discretion of the module co-ordinator who has some autonomy as to how they want these to look. However, there is certain information that all module handbooks must include and that will be standard for all module handbooks. We will ensure that this is done consistently across the modules. We will be sure to correct the error highlighted.
3. This module had a Teaching Assistant this year for the first time due to an increase in student numbers, and there were some issues with the nature and extent of feedback as a result. This will be better managed for next year so that these issues do not re-occur.
4. The programme team are currently making changes to assessment across the core modules which includes removing 'participation' as a form of assessment.
5. As a result of the external examiner's comments on this, we have now standardised all the weightings for assessments across the core modules so that the essays are weighted the same. We have also removed 'participation' as one of the assessments.
6. It is my understanding that all marking will move to paperless across the department.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. Your positive comments regarding students experimenting with digital research methods
3. Exemplary feedback to student in most cases and detailed than one would ordinarily expect

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

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 the University Student Intranet and will be available to all students and staff.

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.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar