

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)



External Examiners are required to complete and submit Reports at least annually and within one month of the programme Examining Board.

Completed External Examiner Report Forms should be sent to:

ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses will be made upon receipt of this Report Form and upon receipt in hard copy of a completed External Examiner Claim Form for Reimbursement of Fees and Expenses and expenses receipts. This Report Form and the associated Claim Form may be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

External Examiner Reports are made available in full to students. For this reason, and in accordance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, individual staff and students should not be named within the Report.

Please note that External Examiner reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

Cardiff University prefers External Examiners to complete their Report Forms electronically and to submit them by email as indicated above. If, for any reason an External Examiner prefers to provide their report in hard copy it should be sent to *Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.*

PAYMENT OF FEES CANNOT BE AUTHORISED UNTIL RECEIPT OF THIS COMPLETED FORM AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM

Name of External Examiner: Professor Jackie Harrison

Institution: University of Sheffield

Programme of study and subject(s) examined: BA Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies

Academic Year/Session to which this report applies: 2012/13

Freedom of Information Act

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

SECTION A

1.1 Programme Structure

Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).

The content of the programme and its stated aims and learning outcomes remain in close alignment and there is a consistency of approach between learning outcomes, stated aims and what was taught and assessed.

This is my fourth and final year as External Examiner and I have been consistently impressed with the range and scope of the modules taught and the different and imaginative types of assessment used to produce a coherent degree programme. The modules continue to reflect the research interests and expertise of the staff, meaning that research-led teaching is very much in evidence. The modules on the degree programme are diverse, interesting and clearly engage both the students and staff in the teaching and learning process. Once again there was ample evidence of excellence in students' work, which clearly reflects the efforts of both the staff and students.

1.2 Comparability of Standards

Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?

The standard of this programme when compared with similar programmes is high and the performance of the students in the year 2012/13 is impressive when compared to their peers in similar programmes. It is good to see the JOMEC staff marking to the full range of marks, but there is no doubt that when a first class degree is awarded or an excellent first class, that that mark is justifiable. It is clear that the students undertaking this course have demonstrated achievement of the benchmark standard. Once again, as I have reported before, standards of English and general literacy were high even at the lower end of the marks.

1.3 The Examination Process

Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.

The programme recognises and encourages different cognitive bases for differing modules, but I am satisfied that these are reconciled fairly and consistency through the assessment strategies that are used. The varied array of assessment is commendable and ranges from examinations, practical work, short and long essays, debate reports, memoir essays, seminar presentations, dissertations and reviews. All the assessments in the sample I examined were marked fairly and consistently and moderated correctly. I am pleased to see that the process for assessment of dissertations is extremely rigorous with all dissertations blind second marked with a third process of blind marking should there be a notable disparity between marks. Where blind marking had taken place, the markers had also written up useful notes on their reasons for the mark. These notes were very helpful to the external examining process as were the moderators' notes attached to the other modules.

Feedback given to students was both formative and summative and it is clear from reading the written feedback, which is consistently of high quality, that the students also get a good deal of support during the course of module teaching process. This type of commitment facilitates excellent work from the students and the JOMEC staff should be commended for their commitment and dedication to their students' education and progression.

In the past I have noted some small concerns about the tick box system used for marking, but this year I felt that their use was improved and that the JOMEC staff are using the different assessment systems in a consistent and comprehensive way.

SECTION A (Continued)

1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been actioned?

It was pleasing to see the continued use of blind second marking of the dissertations and the discussions between the two markers recorded on a third marking sheet with clear and fair justification for the final mark awarded.

I was pleased to see the use of the full range of marking and the adaptation of the marking schedule to indicate when a student has achieved a first class mark, an excellent first class mark and a mark that reflected the highest academic achievement and that this system was used carefully and fairly.

1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

N/A

1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

- (i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;**
- (ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;**
- (iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;**
- (iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme.**

1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.

Having undertaken an extra year as External Examiner, I have to conclude that I am very impressed by the rigour and standards of teaching and assessment on this programme as well as by the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff. It has been pleasing to see that External Examiners' suggestions (such as blind second marking of dissertations, marking to the full range of marks) were taken on board and utilised. The way in which the External Examination process is conducted by the School is particularly good with Examiners invited to spend a couple of days in the School enabling them to immerse themselves in the students' work and also to discuss aspects of the programme with the School's staff (who are incredibly helpful) and with fellow Examiners. JOMEC looks after its External Examiners very well and I am sure that by doing this they get the best out of us too.

SECTION B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are 'No'.

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	x		

2.2 Comments

All the material was available in the Examiners' room and staff on hand to explain anything that was unclear. Other material and helpful information was emailed well in advance.

Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		x	
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?	x		
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	x		
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?	x		

2.7 Comments

Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	x		
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme's objectives?	x		
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?	x		
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	x		
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	x		
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?			x

2.14 Comments

As always this process was extremely well organised with excellent and consistent access to scripts and to staff should any questions arise.

SECTION B (Continued)				
Coursework/Dissertations/Projects		Yes	No	N/A
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?	x		
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	x		
2.17 Comments				
Yes, please see my comments above on 2.15 and 2.16				
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)		Yes	No	N/A
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			x
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?			x
2.20 Comments				
Examining Board Meeting		Yes	No	N/A
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	x		
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?	x		
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?		x	
2.24	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(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	x		
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?			x
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			x
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			x
2.28 Comments				
Signed: <u>J.L.Harrison</u> Date: <u>2 July 2013</u>				
Please return this report by email to: ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk				
Your fee and expenses claim form, and any reports which cannot be emailed, should be sent to: Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.				