



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Elain Price		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Academi Hywel Teifi, Swansea University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Newyddiaduraeth – modiwl 'Yr Ystafell Newyddion' (MC2615 / MC3615) Journalism – 'The Newsroom' module		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	22/06/2015

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

I only examined one module, but it was good to come across a Welsh-medium module which wasn't a direct translation of an English-medium module, the module had a Welsh feeling (as regards context and language) because of this. Having read the handbook and spoken to the course leader it's evident that students have benefitted from excellent experiences as guest speakers come to talk to them and as they visit institutions such as the BBC and the Assembly. It's obvious to me that students are greatly enriched by studying this module.

The module is well structured with lectures and assessment which foster students' understanding and skills, and which provide them with an opportunity to see how their skills have developed over the period of the course. The learning outcomes stated are suitable for the work presented.

2. Academic Standards

In general I felt that the marking was rather generous, but the marks were aligned and so I don't recommend changing any marks. As I was only examining one module and as there isn't a similar module in English, it wasn't possible to compare the marks with marks of similar modules within the department. Despite this I would like to make specific comments on two aspects of the module's assessment:

2.1 Language

In the context of the news tasks I personally would have marked and corrected language in a much more detailed fashion especially considering that this was a journalism module and that accurate language is important in the industry. Despite this, I understand the argument voiced by staff that there is a fine line between encouraging students to follow a Welsh-medium module and nurturing their confidence and being too stringent when marking language. One possible compromise might be to draw students' attention to more of their language errors on the work's text but without penalising them any more than is done at present as regards marks. This would enable students to identify their weaknesses and improve their skills.

2.2 Essay

I was slightly disappointed by the essays, as a number of them had insufficient books in their bibliography and as there was inadequate referencing in the body of the text. The best students dealt with recent OFCOM research and reports, although in a general way and I felt that there wasn't enough understanding or awareness of the context and history of the media in Wales and there was very little discussion of radio in the body of the essays. Possibly the nature of the question set should be considered and what exactly is expected within 1500 words in more detail for next year.

3. The Assessment Process

This module had a variety of assessment methods with tasks involving creating news stories, tasks analysing news values and priorities and an academic essay. A range of skills were proven and the tasks also quantified students' understanding and analytical ability. The fact that it's possible for students to attempt two of the tasks more than once (under different conditions) provided students with a good opportunity to see their skills developing from the beginning to the end of the module.

I believe that the balance of the tasks is fair and that they work as they are, I also feel that the tasks have been fairly drawn up to measure students' achievement against the learning outcomes noted in the module handbook.

As noted above, I felt across all tasks that the marks were a little generous, considering my experience of teaching through the medium of Welsh at the University where I work. But, as it wasn't possible to compare this work with another Welsh-medium module from JOMECA, as this is the only Welsh-medium module at present, it's not possible to judge whether the work is at the same standard. Possibly next year I should be provided with an opportunity to view examples of work at the same level in the English provision in order to ensure that there is consistency across levels and across languages.

There was evidence here of double marking, but I would have liked more information. That is, the report mentioned instances where the first marker and second marker disagreed, but there weren't enough details as regards how the marks changed and what the discussion had been between both markers.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Not applicable – this is the first time this module has run and so there are no previous examiners' comments to be incorporated into this report.

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

Unfortunately as I was appointed slightly late in the day, it wasn't possible for me to attend the training session for external examiners. Despite this, the process was smooth. I received the work in good time to read and examine it, and communication with the department was also clear and effective. The booklets and paperwork provided for advice were comprehensive and provided clear support as regards how to draw up the relevant documents, despite this I would have wished to have received the Examination Board Handbook through the medium of Welsh.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There were a number of aspects of good practice I would like to note. First of all, it was good to see that there was clear differentiation between the tasks set from Level 5 and Level 6. The tasks at the higher level required an additional element which proved different skills, or they were tasks which enabled students to demonstrate more detailed understanding and analysis. This was very good to see, as it isn't always easy to ensure this differentiation when teaching two levels together.

It was also good to see tasks which enabled students to view progress in their understanding and skills, as there were tasks for writing a news item and analysing news values and priorities at the beginning and the end of the module. Despite this there was plenty of variety in the circumstances of creating the tasks to avoid duplication, as the assignments at the beginning of the module were completed as homework whereas the tasks at the end of the module occurred in circumstances similar to those found in a newsroom, under time pressure.

Another commendable aspect was that the written feedback presented to students was constructive and clearly showed how students could improve their performance on every level achieved. I also understand that every student had an individual meeting to discuss every task in detail, which is also commendable.

As regards an aspect to be improved, I would recommend that the course handbook should be sent to an editor or proof reader to ensure that any typos, language and formatting errors (i.e. formatting sources following the Harvard system) are corrected, demonstrating the standard students should aim for as regards accuracy, their use of language and referencing.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

Not applicable

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)
Programme/Course Information				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	✓		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		x	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			✓
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			✓
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			✓
Marking Examination Scripts				
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?			✓
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			✓
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			✓
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			✓
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			✓
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	✓		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	✓		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	✓		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	✓		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			✓
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	✓		
Examining Board Meeting				

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

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

ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk

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Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE