



Academic & Student Support Services
Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr
Registry
Y Gofrestrfa
Academic Registrar Cofrestrydd Academaidd
Simon Wright LLB(Hons)

Cardiff University

McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE
Wales UK

Tel please see below
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd

Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE
Cymru Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn gweler isod
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.caerdydd.ac.uk

Sent by email to ana.langer@glasgow.ac.uk

30 October 2020

Dear Dr Langer,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2019/20

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's report for the MA in Political Communication.

Your report does not appear to raise any significant issues that require a more immediate response however, the School has been asked to address the following comments raised in your report:

- **Dissertations**: I think it is worth perhaps discussing whether it is too much for the dissertation to take 60 credits plus 20 more for PRiP 1, especially as the assignments (the proposal and literature review) for the latter could, in some ways, be considered as being credited twice.
- **English Language**: I wonder what the language entry requirements are, and the level of support offered to international during the course, and whether this is enough?
- **Consistency in application of process/policy**: Perhaps the marking criteria could be more consistently spelled out across courses, however. Also there seem to be some issues of consistency in the application (or even in the existence) of penalties for over/under length. Same perhaps with low grades: some markers go as low as 20, whereas for others perhaps a bad grade is a high 40 or even a low 50. Consistency on this is particularly important as this marks will average for each course and later matter for the degree classification
- **Marking criteria**: Review whether all course guides include consistent and up to date assessment instructions and marking criteria for each assignment.
- **Over assessment**: Putting Research into Practice II where there are five assignments. The course is great, and the assessment is actually very useful to prepare them for the dissertation and also helps students develop great



Registered Charity, no. 1136855
Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855

transferable skills. However, 5 assignments do seem a lot for 20 credits for students as well as for markers.

I am confident that the Programme Team will endeavour to address the issues identified in your report and your comments will help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments, including:

1. Your positive comments regarding the programme structure, academic standards, and assessment process.
2. The programme provides a high-quality education, and this is recognised as such by academics and practitioners in the field in the UK and beyond. In my view, it is undoubtedly one of the top 3 Polcom programmes in the country.
3. It is also clear to me that the grades are an accurate reflection of the standards that students achieved and so are the overall degree classifications. The changes made as a result of COVID (the Safety Net Policy) seem reasonable and in line with what has been done by other UK institutions. It is a compassionate policy that also succeeds at maintaining the academic standards.
4. In my view, the suit of assessments across courses in the programme are well designed for testing the ILOs. Moreover, most courses include an applied/practical element, which is great to see. The marking is done fairly and rigorously and is broadly consistent across courses (although some markers seem harsher on language than others), and the feedback is comprehensive and explains well the reasons for the grade and how students can improve.

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's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar