



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Daragh O'Connell		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University College Cork		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	Italian Modern Languages		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-16	Date of Report:	30 June 2016

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

1. Programme Structure

The Department of Italian covers a wide range of very well balanced subject areas; these areas allow for teaching of different genres and different periods. Because of the staffing profiles within the department, the Programme Structure genuinely benefits from expertise across a broad range of areas, and what is of particular relevance, the standard of language modules within the programme is very high

2. Academic Standards

The programme's academic standards are being maintained: from what I have seen from a wide variety of assessed materials all the academic thresholds are being met and are in line with the appropriate national and international benchmarks.

3. The Assessment Process

The examination and awarding of marks were all conducted in a rigorous, fair and transparent manner. I was very pleased with the process. The robustness of the courses and the assessment procedures followed all the guidelines set out clearly in each Module assessment pack. I am happy to report that everything was conducted in accordance with university policy. I was particularly grateful to be given the opportunity to spend a day before the boards reviewing the scripts and assessed pieces – this afforded me a much clearer picture of the range and scope of the modules and their assessment.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

As I mentioned in the previous section, the opportunity to come a day before the boards and view the exams and assessed work greatly enhanced my understanding of the whole assessment process. I thought it is very effective and a definite improvement on the previous practice of sending scripts by post. It is a much more manageable system.

Overall, I continue to be very impressed by the general standard of the modules as the department successfully performs its activities across both language and culture (literary and visual) modules. It is a difficult balance to achieve, but one that the department proved most successful at achieving and maintaining. The Department of Italian at Cardiff performs an important and strategic role in developing and enhancing Italian studies in Wales. The work of the staff in the department is of the highest quality, and the work produced by the undergraduate students testifies to this excellence.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

As mentioned in section 4, the system wherein the examiner comes a day early and reviews the scripts is a definite improvement. I tremendously enjoyed reading the students' work, which at times was quite excellent. Also, the typewritten feedback forms were very clear and I think this is a very good way to continue.

LANGUAGE: Since becoming external examiner in Cardiff I have been an admirer of the seriousness with which the department teaches and assesses language proficiency. The addition of the new Italian Government lecturer enhances this tradition. In both 2nd and Final year there was some really high quality work and I was particularly impressed by the fact that in ML8397 there is a Translation *into* Italian element (many institutions have dispensed with this form of assessment – believing it to be too difficult for students; however, as evidenced by the students of the department this is not necessarily the case). It is extremely important for the department to maintain these very high standards because ultimately Cardiff graduates will be judged on their language abilities.

As I mentioned previously, the department successfully navigates the difficulties of maintaining standards in both language and cultures modules. This is to be commended. As in previous years I was very impressed by the Student Ambassador Teaching Scheme (ML1398) – which to my mind is one of the most effective means for future recruitment – as well as ML8386 – Italian for Professional Purposes. Reflective teaching practices are hugely important in language learning and I'm delighted that this is the case in Cardiff. All language modules are robust and of a very high standard.

CULTURE: I am always very happy to encounter a department which provides students with modules that cover topics such as Dante, the Renaissance and right

up to fascism, Migrations, Italian Women Writers and European cinema. The Department needs to hold on to this variety and aim and strategize so as to be able to provide it in the future. The clearest indication of the scope of the department was the areas covered in the Final Year Dissertation (Female artists in the renaissance; Gender and Generation in Italian Integration in the UK; Women and Modernity in Postwar Cinema; Pasolini and Sadomasochism; Ulysses' 'folle volo' in Dante; Gay cinema; Michelangelo; Welsh/Italian; Robert De Niro). That list alone is enough to convince me of all of the great work that is being done in the department – because these dissertations were written with great passion for the subject, and in some cases, real critical nuanced thinking.

Again, I was also happy that marks were fair and consistent throughout and that the full range of marks were being applied – especially in the upper band in culture modules.

7. Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations (External Examiners for postgraduate Master's Programmes only, see also 9.23-9.29 below)

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 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?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	Y		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
Marking 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?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
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?	Y		
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
9.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A

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

ExternalExaminers@cf.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

SAMPLING OF TAUGHT MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

External Examiners shall be expected to see prescribed numbers and ranges of Dissertations, but not to mark them, on the following basis:

At least 10% of Dissertations for a postgraduate taught Master's Programme, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure) must be seen by the External Examiner(s). Where the total number is less than 10, all Dissertations must be seen by the External Examiner(s) #.

Dissertations seen by External Examiners should include examples from across the whole range of achievement (i.e. Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail).

External Examiners will retain the right to see other Dissertations at random.

Where more than one External Examiner is appointed on a Programme, at least 10% of Dissertations, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure), should be seen collectively by the External Examiners.