

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MA/PG Diploma in Journalism (Magazine Option)

Dear Ms Bye,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies 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.

Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided by the Course Director on behalf of the School.

- 1. the indication that the External Examiner was "disappointed, that at MA level, the standard of subbing accuracy was not higher with many students" and related comments**

Response: We have instituted a series of subbing tests administered at the start of each production session. However, I must also note that the tutors on this course already mark for subediting very rigorously; sadly the students do not always respond to this stimulus.

- 2. the indication in one module "that the students would have benefited from more commentary and explanation of the marks given" and that the External Examiner would have liked to have seen a larger sample of assessments**

Response: We will ensure that every assignment has a standardised feedback sheet attached and that every feedback sheet contains commentary and explanation. In many cases students will have received detailed feedback in one-to-one tutorials but, of course, that cannot be evident to the External Examiner.

We will ensure that the external examiner receives a larger sample and that the sample draws on every phase of the course. It has been general Diploma custom and practice to provide samples only from the final exams and work done in the second semester but we will institute a new practice on the Magazine course.

- 3. detailed observations on "differences in student approach" to the assessment of the "Magazine Concept/Feature Series".**

Response: My interpretation of the external's comments here is that students approach this assignment – which is a major element of coursework – in very different states of mind. There are those who take it very seriously and those who treat it far less seriously. This is a pattern I have noticed in every establishment at which I have performed external examiner duties and if there were a simple solution I would have patented it and made my fortune. Sadly, we cannot force students to take any assignment seriously and beyond constantly stressing the importance of this piece of work (which we do already) I am at a loss as to what the remedy might be.

I hope these responses are satisfactory and have addressed the concerns raised in your report.

Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

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 Registry web pages and will be available publically.

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.

Mrs Jill Bedford
Director of Registry and Academic Services