

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Catherine Elliott		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MA Digital Documentaries		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2019/20	Date of Report:	31/07/20

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation stage Examining Board in the case of postgraduate Master's programmes).

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

The overall design of the course is very good, in my view. There is a clear journey throughout the year, from initial concepts to conclusion. Information for all modules is clear and comprehensive and supports the overall convincing design of the course.

This course is, however, new & finding its feet and this is evident in the nature of some of the assessments set & submitted. This reflects on the curriculum design and programme structure which needs to address some of the issues that have arisen in this first year of delivering the course. These are some of my observations:

- There seems to be a lack of understanding of the demands of storytelling in the students' films, which points to a need to watch more documentaries and for greater emphasis of this in the curriculum.
- The technical standards of some of the films have great room for improvement. This is, of course, due in part to the issues of filming during lockdown. It is also perhaps due to a lack of high-end filming equipment

which would allow for more visual flair and experiment which is crucial in this field.

- The understanding of the requirements of different audiences and markets also needs more emphasis in the curriculum.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

I can confirm that the standards set for the modules on MA Digital Documentaries Film were appropriate for MA level study. The overall content and standards set produce a cohesive set of related modules.

This course can be said to be informed by the QAA benchmark statements for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies 2019 (in relation to programme content) and the Qualification Descriptors for Master's Degrees (levels and skills).

Furthermore:

- The real strength of the submissions is in the written work rather than the films. The essays are generally of a good standard, whilst the visual material is quite weak when compared with other UK HEIs. There are a few notable exceptions to this.
- The overall marks represented a good range of achievement.
- It should also be noted that this course is currently very small with only 5 students in this first year.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

The assessment process was very good. The feedback on all the submitted work was very constructive, with excellent suggestions for improvement. The marking was fair and consistent across the modules. It is not clear, however, as to how the second marking / internal moderation is carried out. It would be very useful to make this process more transparent.

In some modules there seemed to be a lack of clarity on what was being demanded of the students. For instance, with the reflective essays for the *Documentary Practice* module it was unclear as to what was required & this was reflected in the very mixed outcomes, whereas the *Documentary Studies* essays were very good & demonstrated an excellent breadth of knowledge and understanding.

4. Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable) (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

N/A.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

N/A. This is a new MA course.

6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

My preparation for the role of External Examiner was interrupted by the Covid19 pandemic. I did not visit the university or meet any students or have any training. I was well informed about the course by the Course Leader & about the External Examining process by the Student Support Executive Officer.

It was very good to have all the students' work accessible digitally. There were, however, several issues regarding having the correct feedback forms, essays & films in the External Examiner's folder on Learning Central.

7. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

The emphasis on thorough research before filming is excellent – as evidenced in the module *Directing the Documentary*. This stage of filmmaking is often neglected by students & the courses attempt to address this with a very rigorous and in-depth approach both in the teaching & the assessment is to be commended.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

N/A.

9. 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				
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?		N	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
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?			N/A
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
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				

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?			N/A
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:
externalexaminers@cardiff.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