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**Sent by email to [Karen.Lury@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Karen.Lury@glasgow.ac.uk)**

**02 November 2020**

Dear Professor Lury,

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

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's report for the BA in Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, BA in Journalism and Culture, BA in Journalism and Communications, BA in Media and Communications.

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:

- **Degree outcomes**: There was perhaps some sense that there was a small rise in the number of 1st class degrees awarded but I felt comfortable that this reflected the students' achievement not just over the last few months but more comprehensively over their studies
- **Textual analysis**: the need for students to gain specific skills in this area. Quantitative methodologies tend to dominate in dissertations and in the assessments, I examined this year. This means - again in the modules I examined – there is little room or evident training in qualitative analysis.
- **Holistic review of the programmes**: I would also suggest that there needs to be a more definite plan put in place to have a holistic review of the programmes addressing issues of content overlap both within and between the different programmes on offer to students.
- **Moderation**: Would it be possible to provide a clear and universally adopted template for the second markers' summary comments so that they all provide the same amount of information?
- Would staff consider introducing modules **that offered students access to older media texts/historical studies of media?**



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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.

### Degree Outcomes

Whilst you have not raised this as a concern in your report from a subject specific point of view, the Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee has asked the School to review their degree outcomes profile as there has been a significant rise in first class honours degrees during 2019/20 compared with other years.

The School will be required to look at this in detail to try and understand any underlying factors that may have contributed to this both positive and negative. I am sure you will agree that it is important we ensure that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained with reference to external expectations in line with our responsibility to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement as specified by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) Statement of Intent to protect the value of UK degrees.

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

1. Your positive comments regarding the programme structure, academic standards, and assessment process.
2. There is evidently a very deep level of engagement in teaching by staff and students have very clear directions as to what is expected for each assessment. The level of work achieved is surely testament to the efforts of students but also to teaching staff (both permanent and GTAs) in supporting students during this difficult period – this was particularly evident in terms of the dissertations I examined.
3. **Fashion Futures**: I was really impressed with the quality of work and felt that the module had evidently communicated its aims/aspirations to this group of students very clearly. It was evident from the portfolio that the students would leave with a very good set of transferable skills.
4. **Reporting Conflict in the Civil Sphere** and **Birth, Death and Marriage in the Media** were fascinating and innovative modules. Students (particularly in Reporting Conflict) produced some outstanding work and it was clear to see how these modules could also 'reach out' and interconnect with other modules available to the students in a way that would develop their 'independent curiosity'.
5. **Body/Image** was also an interesting module, with some of the students' presentations presenting some really lively and interesting analysis and evidently reflecting their own interests/passions.
6. 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.
7. 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.

8. 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.

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service, and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar