



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:	Prof Andrew ROTHWELL		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Swansea University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	MA in Translation Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-16	Date of Report:	16/07/2016

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

As I commented last year, the MA programme structure is now mature and stable. It has an appropriate balance of academic and professionally-focused elements, and provides a good range of choice for students.

2. Academic Standards

Standards remain very high, and fully comparable to those of other MAs of this type with which I am familiar. As in previous years, very few students are in danger of not meeting minimum standards of work, which suggests that selection at recruitment is accurate and teaching is effective. It was particularly pleasing to note this year that quite a few students for whom English is not their first language achieved very good outcomes, which suggests particularly effective teaching sensitive to the needs of this group.

3. The Assessment Process

Once again I must commend the full and detailed engagement of markers with student work of all types. Across the board, I had a strong sense that markers were conducting, through their extensive comments, a formative dialogue with the student, producing exemplary and highly useful feedback. The full range of marks is now employed, but I would still recommend a closer engagement by markers with the very clear and detailed assessment criteria, which should be reflected more in the comments. This might help to avoid the occasional mis-matches that I saw, e.g. a case in which comments including 'excellent answer', 'an accomplished essay', 'commanding knowledge of the reading list' etc. were paired with a bare 70. I wonder

whether, for any given exercise, it might be helpful for the assessment form to have at the top a grid of tick-boxes representing different levels of achievement of the criteria?

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Last year, I requested that consideration be given to producing specific assessment criteria for the ATP exercise, and these have now appeared and been thoroughly implemented. There has also been progress in taking forward my second recommendation, that a standardised assessment report form be used, but some variability in paperwork persists.

The points I made last year about the very varied practices that I encountered with respect to electronic marking remain essentially unresolved, and I am concerned that students will find the variability both confusing and incoherent. To give an example from just one module: the first marker used Grademark to assess a run of essays; the first-marked essays were then printed off complete with Grademark comments at the end, and manually annotated by the second marker; this version was then scanned and made available to me (and, I hope, the students) in an electronic form of sub-optimal legibility. Presumably, the second marker's unwillingness or inability to use Grademark caused all this unnecessary extra work. Finding a good system of electronic marking is a non-trivial problem, but the prevailing apparent free-for-all is clearly not sustainable.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

1. The practice of requiring students to submit and discuss with the tutor the plan of an essay, report etc. before they write the full assignment, then submitting it along with the finished piece, seems to me an excellent formative strategy which deserves to be widely adopted.
2. The range of essay topics available to students, and in some cases the freedom for them to propose their own, no doubt places additional demands on assessors but is very beneficial to students, not least in giving them the opportunity to develop a specialist interest which in some cases might turn in the direction of a research vocation.
3. The consistently encouraging, supportive tone of feedback comments across all the modules that I saw is highly commendable and has doubtless had a significant beneficial influence on student achievement. It also bespeaks a committed and confident teaching team.

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

Marks awarded corresponded transparently to the assessors' comments and to the criteria. Most reports were very full, and all dissertations and ATP commentaries had been double-marked (I appreciate that double-marking isn't always possible for translations involving rarer languages such as Kurdish). I would always encourage markers to word-process their reports, and I hope these are sent on to students for feedback purposes. A final recommendation, which I believe I also made last year, would be for markers to make more explicit and systematic reference to the assessment criteria in their summaries, both to help the student and the external appreciate exactly how the mark was arrived at, and to clarify their own judgements (I suspect this is more important in the middle range, where work often exhibits quite mixed characteristics, than at the very top or bottom). But both the processes and the judgements arrived at seemed to me, on the evidence of the samples I have seen over the years, sound and robust.

Given the bulk and weight of bound dissertations to be sent and returned through the post, I would strongly recommend an all-electronic workflow in future, from submission by the student, to online assessment by the internal markers and scrutiny by the external examiner. This can be achieved in various ways, which all have the advantage that the student can receive feedback from the fully-assessed work.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

At the end of my fourth year, I can report that the MA in Translation Studies seems to me to be running very well, and to be reliably delivering appropriate and valuable outcomes for students. I am grateful to the MA team members with whom I have worked over that period for their constructive engagement with my questions and suggestions, and I would commend their professionalism and dedication to the creation of a high-quality learning environment, leading to the evident success of their students.

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?			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
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?	Y		
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?	Y		
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?	Y		
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?		N	
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?	Y		
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?	Y		

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.