

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012-2013 - MA in International Public Relations & Global Communications

Dear Ms Yeomans,

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 issues which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided by Elliot Pill, the Course Director, on behalf of the School.

"Can I, on behalf of the teaching team, thank you for your expertise, insight and honesty in reviewing the academic work produced by our MA International Public Relations and Global Communications Management students (IPR&GCM) for the academic year 2012/13.

We value the openness of our communication with you not just during this exam board period but throughout the academic year. We strive to ensure we take on board your comments and make appropriate changes to course delivery.

I thank you for your positive comments and look forward to working with you across the coming academic year to implement course updates.

Looking at your report, I felt the following three points were areas to discuss.

A suggested review of the "key criteria and marking schemes for awarding distinctions between 70-79 per cent"...and those of "80% and above, as this is not always clear".

A good point and a further description could give better guidance to students in that 'excellent' 30% range. This would of course vary from one area to another. So I would suggest two new banding descriptions in the upper distinction category – one for theory-based work and one for practice-based work. In terms of timeframe, we could build this into our core module course descriptions for the coming academic year and highlight in the student handbook.

In the context of "Considerable improvements to the assessment process" the indication that "there is still a tendency to use 'standard' marking grids that may or may not be appropriate to the learning outcomes tested in a module".

Agreed. We do, as a School, try to standardise approaches. I don't think this works all the time and we need flexibility in adapting course-specific feedback marking grids and link that feedback to the learning outcomes of the module. I propose we review marking grids and introduce new and more relevant marking grids (where needed) during the coming academic year.

The observation that the "Programme Specification...should...contain learning outcomes for the whole programme".

Agreed, and we will update learning outcomes for the whole programme and build into the course handbook for the coming academic year."

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 (including confirmation that "All students are pushed to achieve level outcomes such as critical engagement with their discipline and consistently demonstrate a scholarly and professional approach") and assessment process;**
- b. **[4] your observation that "Feedback comments are clear and constructive" and related comment.**

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