

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:	Mark Pendleton		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	The University of Sheffield		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	Japanese Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015-16	Date of Report:	02/08/16

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

The programme has a coherent structure that is broadly aligned to equivalent programmes at other UK institutions, particularly in the development of language modules across the programme. I would encourage the university to explore future expansion of module choice, particularly in non-language modules as, in comparison to European languages in the School, choice for Japanese Studies students appears somewhat limited.

2. Academic Standards

Academic standards are high and conform to the QAA Benchmark Standards for Languages, Cultures and Societies. Language levels conform to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) with students equipped at C1 competence by the end of their degree program and B1 for the end of the 2nd year.

3. The Assessment Process

Assessment is well designed to test students' achievements of learning outcomes. Teaching staff were very responsive to my queries and minor points of concern regarding draft exam scripts and other matters when they were raised.

A minor question for consideration by the language team is the extent to which the required examination tasks were able to be completed to the expected standards within time limits. This appeared to be a particular concern in the first semester when a proportion of students struggled to complete the designated

tasks within the exam period. Teaching staff have responded positively to these concerns, making some adjustments to both first semester assessment and the examination design for second semester. In future years, slightly shorter examination tasks, an overall smaller number of tasks, or slightly longer examination times may be worth exploring further.

Similarly, we have been in discussion about whether it may be worth providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their comprehension of Japanese language texts in English, rather than the current standard practice of answering in Japanese. This is something that is more common at my institution, where comprehension tends to be assessed in English, with composition and other production tasks assessed in Japanese. This may also allow students to be able to demonstrate the range of tasks necessary for demonstrating proficiency in Japanese language within the time constraints of an examination.

A slightly more rigorous proofreading process of draft exam papers would be appreciated – drafts that came to me did often contain grammatical, spelling or stylistic errors.

Despite these minor concerns however, overall processes conformed well to university policy and procedures, while providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency through benchmarking against national and European standards.

Marking schema were applied fairly and consistently across all cohorts and modules.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

None – this is my first year in post.

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

Induction activity was well organised and structured, providing a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities of the role of external examiner at Cardiff.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

It is clear from my review of samples of work that Cardiff students are achieving very good levels of Japanese. Teaching staff should be commended on their commitment to developing proficiency in their students.

Furthermore, while the limited range of non-language modules for Japanese students may be an area for potential future exploration (see comment above), students are regardless achieving a good understanding of key issues in Japanese culture and society. This was particularly evident in some excellent final year research projects. I have recommended that the highest of these be nominated for the prestigious British Association of Japanese Studies Ivan Morris Memorial Prize for a student submitting an outstanding piece of work in the field of Japanese Studies at a UK university.

One final additional small area of concern was in the implementation of the new system for external examiners (ie. the on-site viewing of samples and attendance

at the exam boards). While this was generally well-managed by professional service staff, the internal School exam board largely did not consider students on the Japanese programme (most of which are to my understanding in joint honours programmes and were therefore considered at a board on another day). This meant that there was little benefit of me being in attendance. In future years, greater consideration of how to make best use of external examiners' time through closer scheduling of relevant exam boards (where possible), or consideration of all students in the School at the standard internal board, would be welcome. Should this not be possible, a clearer indication to external examiners of what elements of the board process they should participate in would be appreciated.

Overall, however, during my first year at Cardiff I have had the privilege of reviewing an excellent Japanese programme that conforms well to expected standards. The administration support from professional services staff – in particular communication – has also been of the highest level.

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

N/A.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

N/A.

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	
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			
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?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			

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.