

**Arab Open University**

**Summary of External Examiners Reports**

**Academic Year: 2024-2025**

**Semester: Fall**

**Programme: FLS**

**Tracks: MA in Literature**

**No of External Examiners of the Programme: 1**

**No of Externally Examined Courses: 9**

1. **Chief External Examiners' response and Comments: Prof. John Strachan**

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| **Please confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme are consistent and appropriate, and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair, reliable across the provision.** |
| * “I can confirm that the standards set are appropriate for the award element, based on my knowledge of the appropriate documentation shared with me over previous years (and updated on a regular basis, where necessary). I also confirm that the standards here are equivalent to comparable courses in Children’s Literature in Great Britain.”
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| **Please confirm that sufficient information and evidence of professional work and students’ assessment were -received by the programmes’ external examiners to enable them to t fulfill their role.** |
| * I saw a good number of scripts and was very pleased to note consistency of marking throughout. There was some very sophisticated analysis in the higher-end scripts, offering illuminating takes on both classic and more contemporary texts in children’s’ literature.”
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| **Commendations:** |
| * I strongly commend the way in which external examiner feedback is dealt with in this module, and in the Faculty of Language Studies in general. EEs are invariably listened to, with our feedback informing pedagogic practice and addressed directly in the agenda for each CAC and not addressed in some perfunctory manner. This is very good practice.
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| **Suggestions for Enhancement** |
| None  |

1. **Extracts from External Examiners report form**

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Éadaoin Agnew**

 **Examined Modules: A801, A802, A803, A804, A805N, A806, A807, A808 & A817**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

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| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module.
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| * I confirm that the standards set are appropriate for the award and the subject benchmarks.
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| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes
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| * Generally, there is a high quality of work throughout the student assignments. Individuals demonstrate a good range of literary knowledge and exemplify precise knowledge of critical terms and theoretical frameworks.
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| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes.
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| * The MA students at AOU always demonstrate passion, enthusiasm, and intellectual curiosity.
* The students exemplify excellent knowledge about their chosen topics and are able to apply knowledge across modules to enhance research specialisms. This becomes really clear in the dissertation work which is evidently the culmination of a really focused programme of study.
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| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students
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| * I was pleased to see improved essay writing skills in this cohort. In my last report, I mentioned some bad practices in relation to essay organisation and presentation, such as the overuse of sub-headings, and it was nice to see that these have been greatly improved.
* As always, the high quality of work is a testament to the work of the GCCs and BCCs and I commend their dedication and their extensive international literary knowledge.
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| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes)
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| * The assessments are well designed with very specific directions about how the students should include the material from the module and I think this is particularly good practice in the light of increasing use of AI.
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| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments
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| * The relationship between assessments, stated objectives and learning outcomes is clear, coherent, and detailed, as reflected in the Assignment Briefs.
* There is some discrepancy in the correlation between category boxes and the language used in the qualitative feedback. While it is clear that some categories bear more weight than others, a score of 48/50, for example, should equate with excellent marks and evaluations in almost all categories (not just very good) and this is not always the case. Indeed, markers can use the ticked categories as a good guide for grade bands and how they comment on the student’s work.
* It will be helpful to see numerically that there a significant difference between good work, very good work, and excellent work, especially when there is room for improvement.

The Deam discussed these points with the GCCs, and measures were taken to implement the EE’s suggestions. The following is the GCC’s response and action based on discussion with the Dean and BCCs:“We acknowledge the importance of aligning qualitative feedback with numerical scores to ensure clarity. Going forward, we will provide additional guidance to markers to ensure consistency and prevent misalignment between category boxes and comments. We will also review our grading criteria to enhance clarity for students. Finally, the Dean has instructed us to make sure that a score of 90% and above is given to the very best with a justification of the mark.” |