

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2010– 2011

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION*Subject area and awards being examined:*

School of: English	Subject(s): Theatre and Global Development/ Theatre Making
Programme(s) / Module(s): MA Theatre and Global Development/MA in Theatre Making	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) MA

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than 6 weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to:

**Head of Academic Quality and Standards,
Academic Quality and Standards Team,
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building,
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT**

PART B: COMMENTS FOR THE INSTITUTION ON THE EXAMINATION PROCESS AND STANDARDS***Matters for Urgent Attention***

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box.

NA

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

NA

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School.

I have had an interesting experience examining on these degrees. There are only a small number of students registered annually but they are given a very good programme of modules and appear to be looked after well. At the higher end the standard of the work is very good although over the three years I have advised stretching the mark range at both ends. The first batch of essays have consistently lacked an appropriate level of engagement with research at the lower end and this needs to be very formally addressed.

Standards

- 1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award?**
 - The appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
 - The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

All intended learning outcomes and content are appropriate and the standards set for the degree are appropriate.

- 2. Did the aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?**
 - The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

There are few programmes which compare but the programme meets benchmarks.

- 3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs?**
 - The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
 - The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

Assessment methods appear to be appropriate and students are generally given very detailed and constructive feedback.

- 4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and ILOs?**
 - The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

See comments below.

- 5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum**

NA

- 6. The nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year**

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

NA

- 7. The influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching**

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

The degree programmes are clearly informed by recent research practice although some students are less able to engage with these fields of knowledge than others. See general comments.

The Examination Process

8. **The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?**

- *Whether external examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

Yes although the timing of the dissertations was problematic

9. **Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks?**

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes

10. **Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

Yes although I was not invited to see any practice

11. **Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes

12. **Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

NA

For Examiners involved in Mentoring Arrangements

If you have acted as a mentor to a new external examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements.

NA

Other Comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form.

The range of essays sent showed a good range of achievement and at the higher end the work was thoughtful and thought-provoking as well as being well articulated and contextualised. At the lower end of marks the work showed very limited evidence of research and whilst some markers commented on this, I am concerned that the requirement to carry out better – breadth and depth – of research is not more formally embedded in the curriculum. At MA level one always has a far wider range of ability on entry, but students should be receiving lower marks for work which is basically opinion and lacking in any desire or ability to locate itself critically in the field as a whole.

Making Theatre in the Community/ Theatre Practice 11

There is evidence here to suggest that the students are working at a very high standard in these modules. Some of the work is very well conceptualised and the written documentation contains reflective analysis, which is thoughtful and critical. Some of the 'Project Reports' are rather weak and reveal a lack of understanding of the process of formulating and delivering workshops. Some of the feedback given to students is extremely thoughtfully put together and I would congratulate staff on the time and care they have taken to offer constructive criticism to students (<<<<>>>>). The questionnaires given out the 'user' groups or institutions in which the students are working are really useful also. There is some really great work here. I would only comment that I wonder if students are provided with any kind of pro forma to use as a guideline for the formulation of their planning documents?

Dissertations:

I received these only a few days in advance of the Exam Board and would normally have expected to have more time to look them over.

At the higher end the dissertations I saw were very well written and it is a shame that the candidates did not push their critical analysis a little further as, had they done so, it would have been easy to move them into the first class range. There is evidence of a rigorous process of double and triple marking for one dissertation here – which is pleasing in this day and age where often second marking is cursory!

I am grateful to the administrators for sending the work from these degrees. Overall the work is of a good standard even if the organisation/timing of sending work through is a little irritating. I am only very sorry to have had to withdraw from the Exam Board meeting this year as it would have been good to meet staff again. I know these degree programmes only register small numbers of students but they feel very 'bespoke' in terms of the level of feedback and support to given to the students. Such degree programmes will be sought after in the coming years. I think Leeds have it pitched correctly and congratulate them on delivering such an interesting range of modules.

MA in Theatre and Global Development/ Theatre Making
University of Leeds
Theatre Workshop/Dept of English

Semester I: Essays

The range of essays sent showed a good range of achievement and at the higher end the work was thoughtful and thought-provoking as well as being well articulated and contextualised. At the lower end of marks the work showed very limited evidence of research and whilst some markers commented on this, I am concerned that the requirement to carry out better – breadth and depth – of research is not more formally embedded in the curriculum. At MA level one always has a far wider range of ability on entry, but students should be receiving lower marks for work which is basically opinion and lacking in any desire or ability to locate itself critically in the field as a whole.

Professor <<<>> has noted that such comments provide good ‘ammunition for seeking to ensure that students engage better with research in future in writing their essays’ – whilst this is well received I still believe that the question is **how** to engage them. This requirement to engage has to be embedded in the marking and this batch of essays pitched a number on the 58/60 borderline which I would have marked far lower. The marking range for this batch of semester 1 essays might have been stretched much more confidently into the lower 50s.

Semester II essays:

Making Theatre in the Community/ Theatre Practice 11

There is evidence here to suggest that the students are working at a very high standard in these modules. Some of the work is very well conceptualised and the written documentation contains reflective analysis, which is thoughtful and critical. Some of the ‘Project Reports’ are rather weak and reveal a lack of understanding of the process of formulating and delivering workshops (one reports that the group initially worked with got bored and so the workshop leader decided to work with another group – this knowledge should have come out of the initial research enquiry and process!). Some of the feedback given to students is extremely thoughtfully put together and I would congratulate staff on the time and care they have taken to offer constructive criticism to students (<<<>>). The questionnaires given out the ‘user’ groups or institutions in which the students are working are really useful also. There is some really great work here. I would only comment that I wonder if students are provided with any kind of pro forma to use as a guideline for the formulation of their planning documents?

Dissertations:

<<<>>

I am grateful to the administrators for sending the work from these degrees. Overall the work is of a good standard even if the organisation/timing of sending work through is a little irritating. I am only very sorry to have had to withdraw from the Exam Board meeting this year as it would have been good to meet staff again. I know these degree programmes only register small numbers of students but they feel very 'bespoke' in terms of the level of feedback and support to given to the students. Such degree programmes will be sought after in the coming years. I think Leeds have it pitched correctly and congratulate them on delivering such an interesting range of modules.

Head of School
School of English
The University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Fax +44 (0)113 343 4774

9 February 2012

Dear

Many thanks for your helpful reports on our MA programmes in Theatre and Global Development and Theatre Making. They have now been considered by our Taught Student Education Committee. Colleagues are pleased that you think our students enjoy a good programme of modules and that they are 'well looked after' and we are grateful that you identify the very helpful and supportive feedback which students have received on the Theatre Making programme

We have taken note of your helpfully detailed comments about spreading the range of marks and your particular concern that performances at the lower range of the scale can lack the intensity and rigour of research. This is something which we will address.

I have also taken note of your comments about the tight schedule for the consideration of dissertations. We hope to remedy this in part by giving Externals more time for the consideration of sample dissertations next year, though I am afraid that in those cases where an adjudication is required it will as ever, of necessity, require a rather quick turn-around. In my experience, this is an inevitable and unavoidable part of examining.

By way of maintaining protocol – which is, of course, there for good reason – I would ask you please to refrain from mentioning any candidates by name in any future reports.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your work during the course of the year and for the careful consideration you have given to these two programmes in your reports.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School