

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

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

School of:	Subject(s): English and other literatures	
IMS		
Programme(s) / Module(s):	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)	MA in Medieval Studies and undergraduate elective modules.
MEDV5110 Research Methods and Bibliography		
MEDV3410 Visions of Ecstasy, Medieval Women Mystics and their World		
MEDV5250 Vikings, Saxons & Heroic Cultur		
MEDV5130 Research Project		
MEDV5140 Dissertation		

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.

NONE

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?

N/A

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.

N/A

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.*

The intended learning outcomes seemed appropriate for MA level awards, and the courses were well structured and delivered. Marking standards are high, and generally well justified in terms of feedback to the students, although in some cases the ticks in the boxes on the feedback sheet did not always match the verbal comments.

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.*

The aims and ILOs seem comparable with the MSt programme in medieval English studies in Oxford.

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.*

The design and structure of the assessment methods and the marking arrangements are admirable. Student performance quality indicate a high standard of teaching delivery. Feedback was given on all work and there was evidence of students using it to improve performance.

I suggested last year that research studies and dissertations should (also) be electronically submitted. It was not clear this year however who was to forward the projects to the externals, whether the first examiner or the IMS office, so although having electronic copies was helpful, the administration needs to be sorted out for next year.

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.*

Academics standards are high. I was impressed by the evident improvement in the writing of some students over the course of the programme. The best work was very good indeed while the less good work was broadly satisfactory. It was good to note a clear learning curve.

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

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.

As in previous years, detailed and conscientious feedback is crucial to continuing improvement. Students should continue to be encouraged to submit their dissertations and research projects electronically as well as in hard copy, and preferably in a single file, so that all the material – title page, project, bibliography – are kept together.

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.

Teaching in the modules which I saw was strongly informed by current research; the bibliographies for the modules showed that tutors were well aware of the latest research and were frequently actively involved in producing it. The top students were producing work which could easily, after revision, contribute to original research in their areas.

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.*

Guidance and information was given as was clarification where necessary.

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.

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

yes – it was particularly useful to be briefed about developments at IMS which had occurred during the year, and the future direction of the programme in its new home in the School of History.

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

Yes. Mitigating circumstances were mentioned at the examiners' meeting and this was of assistance in determining the final marks of students on borderlines.

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.

Other Comments

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

From: [Richard Whiting](#)
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: External Examiners Report - MA in Medieval Studies
Date: 18 November 2011 16:12:37

Dear

Thank you for your external examiner's report for our MA in Medieval Studies.

I am replying to you as Head of the School of History where, as you mention in your report, the IMS is now located. We are indeed very glad they are with us, and we shall endeavour to give them the freedom and security they need in order to flourish in their interdisciplinary activities.

You mention two matters in particular that we shall need to address in the year ahead, the first being the discrepancy that sometimes occurs between the ticks in the feedback boxes and the comments that go with them and indeed, this is something that our externals for the undergraduate programmes in the School have noticed happening on occasion. We also have to clarify the responsibility for sending on the project work to externals.

We are glad that the work you saw was impressive, and that the assessment and examination procedures were satisfactory.

I am afraid we didn't meet when you came to Leeds, but I am grateful for your thorough and helpful report, and for your own valuable contribution to maintaining the soundness of our examinations system.

With best wishes,
Richard Whiting

Professor Richard Whiting
Professor of Modern British History and Head of School

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

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

School of:	Subject(s): English and other literatures	
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N/A

Standards

1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award?

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- *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.

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

yes – it was particularly useful to be briefed about developments at IMS which had occurred during the year, and the future direction of the programme in its new home in the School of History.

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With best wishes,
Richard Whiting

Professor Richard Whiting
Professor of Modern British History and Head of School

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

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Subject area and awards being examined:

School of: Institute for Medieval Studies (History) Programme(s) / Module(s): Medieval Studies	Subject(s): Medieval Studies modules awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) BA
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N/A

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?

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 been favourably impressed with the care and attention with which the Medieval Studies programme at Leeds is both taught and assessed. It is very rigorous and demanding, especially in its attention to languages and palaeography. The only significant change which has taken place during the four years I have been examiner has been the decision to move the Institute within the School of History. I hope that this will not adversely affect the interdisciplinary nature of the Medieval Studies programmes as this is their great strength both nationally and internationally.

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.*

This is all perfectly in order.

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.*

Yes, they do.

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.*

The quality of teaching across the Medieval Studies programmes is high. A range of assessment methods is applied depending on the nature of the content and is always appropriate to that content.

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.*

Yes, they are: the range of modules of offer is good.

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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 bulk of the modules which students take on this masters programme are research-led and indeed the students are generally undertaking first-hand research themselves, notably in long essays and dissertations.

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

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

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

These were exemplary as always,

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

Yes

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.

Other Comments

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

I would just like to say that the medievalists at Leeds are a very impressive group of people, who are passionate about their subjects. They manage to transmit this enthusiasm to their students. The standard of student work is generally very high and sometimes outstanding, notably in dissertations. By the same token, when students are not able to complete work satisfactorily marks are awarded accordingly and standards are maintained.

I would also like to commend the administration of this programme. The current administrator took over at short notice and has been very helpful throughout the whole process.

From: [Richard Whiting](#)
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: External Examiners Report - MA Medieval Studies modules
Date: 18 November 2011 15:48:29

Dea

much for your report on the MA in Medieval Studies.

We are glad that all was in order in terms of the quality of the students' work, our assessment of it, and the administration of the process. We also appreciate how well Patrick Bourne has done in picking up the threads of IMS business.

We are very much aware of the need to give the IMS space to flourish in their new location within the School of History. They certainly bring many assets to what has always been a thriving area of the School's activity, and you are quite right about the importance of the interdisciplinary character of the IMS.

We do appreciate your own support for medieval history at Leeds, not least through your scrupulous attention to the details of the examination process and your advice about how to treat our students fairly.

Thank you for all you have done in your stint as our external!

Best wishes,
Richard

Professor Richard Whiting
Professor of Modern British History and Head of School

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