

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Modern Languages
Subject(s):	French
Programme(s) / Module(s):	All Undergraduate
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six 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

Throughout my period as external the examination organisation, setting and assessment has been impeccable. Questions have been thoughtful, marking has been thorough and helpful, and administrative back-up has been clear and seamless. Colleagues at Leeds have always welcomed advice and suggestions, applying such judiciously. The development to an integrated School has been managed with aplomb.

Overall it has been a pleasure to external at Leeds, which is undoubtedly at the forefront in French studies.

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.*

Learning outcomes and standards were entirely 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.*

The aims and ILOs were entirely in line with those of other Russell Group institutions.

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 was impeccably with thorough from question setting through to classification. Feedback was full and helpful and evidence suggested a real dialogue between first and second markers.

Teaching and assessment methods provide the students with variety across genres and chronological spread.

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.*

Attainment is across the range and compatible with other Russell Group institutions. At the top of the scale Leeds students reach the highest levels of attainment.

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. Please comment on 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.

The transition to an integrated School has been managed effectively and appears to have progressed without hitch.

7. Please comment on 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.

One of strengths of French at Leeds is the extent to which specialised modules are research led. Options cover a broad range of methodologies, genres and chronological coverage. Particularly with respect to the latter, such coverage increasingly sets Leeds apart from peer institutions, many of whom now only provide post-1789 learning possibilities. I would fully encourage continued coverage across the broad spectrum.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

N/A

The Examination/Assessment Process

9. 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.*

Entirely sufficient and well organised.

10. 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, marking criteria?

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

Yes, entirely.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Yes, entirely.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

Yes, entirely.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of a assessment appropriate?

Yes, entirely.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

Yes, entirely. My final year saw the transfer to a combined School Board, which functioned smoothly.

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

Absolutely.

Other comments

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

See part B.

From:
Sent: 18 July 2012 08:30
To:
Subject: FW: Response to examiner's report

Please find attached the response to Laurence Grove's External Examiner report.

Best wishes

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
University of Leeds
LEEDS

-----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: 06 July 2012 18:11
To:
Subject: Response to examiner's report

For info - my response to the external examiner's report is below (approved by _____).

From:
Sent: 06 July 2012 18:08
To:
Cc:
Subject: Response to examiner's report

Dear

Many thanks for your final External Examiner's report.

We are delighted that you commend our teaching and our assessment procedures so highly. We set great store by the range and quality of research-led modules we offer, and it is encouraging to see precisely these aspects being validated externally. We are very pleased, too, that you have observed the importance we place on providing modules across a full range of disciplines and

historical periods, including the pre and post-1789 periods. We are also very grateful to you for your positive comments on the smooth transition that we have made to a unified School structure and your recognition of the organisational challenges that we have faced this year. You will not be surprised to learn that we share your hope that the University will support us with the human and material resources we need in order to consolidate our position nationally as a leading institution for teaching and research in French.

Finally, I should like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us over the past four years. My colleagues and I have found it a real pleasure to work with you, and we all wish you the very best for the future.

Best wishes,

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Modern Languages and Cultures
Subject(s):	French
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA French, BA Modern Languages, etc.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six 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?

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

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.*

Both the programme aims and the ILOs were entirely commensurate with the level of the award.

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

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.*

Consistent with best practice, assessment methods are varied and well adapted to the material taught in both language and content modules. Marking was in all cases careful and rigorous. The one recommendation I wish to make relates to the Final year language paper. The marking guidelines of the English-French translation provide for the award of bonus points as well as negative marking. While the negative marks were scrupulously noted, relatively few bonus points were awarded, with the result that a disproportionate number of students failed this component of the examination. Given that negative marking is known to penalize students at the lower range of performance unduly, I would suggest that examiners be encouraged to award more bonus points than is currently the practice (for example, where only 50% of the students accurately translate some word, this relative achievement could be systematically awarded a bonus) in order to avoid the need to scale the marks upwards during the Externals' moderation.

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

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. Please comment on 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.

I am aware of no significant changes to the curriculum in the current year. The main change I noted was in relation to the discretion of the External Examiners, who no longer have the power to raise individual marks. This change reflects an emerging national trend in Higher Education and is not in itself problematic. However, the fact that External Examiners are no longer authorized to adjust individual marks does increase the importance of ensuring that procedures for second-marking or moderation are robust and, especially, that all borderline performances are read by two people. I noted two courses where the moderation paper trail could have been clearer in this respect. From the documentation available, it appeared to me that the selection of material for moderation had taken place at the level of the different components of the courses, rather than at the level of the individual student's performance, with the result that the work of some students with an overall borderline for that course had not in fact been reviewed by a second marker. It would be advisable to ensure not only that all borderline grades are agreed between two colleagues but furthermore that clear evidence of this agreement is provided.

7. Please comment on 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 teaching in French at Leeds is particularly research-led; the size of the Department means that colleagues have the scope to offer courses relating directly to their area of specialization at undergraduate level.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

I am to act as a mentor in the 2012-13 session.

The Examination/Assessment Process

9. 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; I had timely access to all necessary information.

10. 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, marking criteria?

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

Yes, comprehensive documentation was made available.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Yes.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

Yes. The full range of the students' work was available for inspection. The material I most needed to scrutinize had very helpfully been extracted and left ready for me.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

N/A.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

Yes.

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

Yes

Other comments

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

My visit to Leeds this session has confirmed the impression formed in my first two years as External Examiner that the French programmes available to Leeds students are excellent in every respect. The teaching is diverse, stimulating and research-led, and clearly encourages students to develop a range of transferable skills in both language and content modules. Overall, the students demonstrate a high level of achievement, comparable with the best being achieved nationally.

From:
Sent: 18 July 2012 10:01
To:
Subject: FW: Response to examiner's report

Please find below the response to
approved by

External Examiner report. This has been

Best wishes

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
University of Leeds
LEEDS
LS2 9JT

From:
Sent: 06 July 2012 18:07
To:
Cc:
Subject: Response to examiner's report

Dear

Many thanks for your third External Examiner's report. We are delighted that you commend our teaching and our assessment procedures so highly. We set great store by the range and quality of modules we offer, and it is encouraging to see precisely these aspects being validated externally. We are grateful to you for your appreciation of our commitment to achieving the highest possible standards and to offering our students the best possible university experience.

Your comments in relation to moderation and procedures for checking borderline marks are most helpful. This year, the School of Modern Languages introduced a proforma to be used during the marking process to indicate the proportion of scripts moderated on any one module and to signal any overall recommendations made. I will ensure that this proforma is used more systematically next year as part of the moderation process in French, so that we have a more robust system of documentation in place. On borderline cases, it is not School policy to check borderline marks on individual modules and this is done at the classification board meeting on the basis of a student's composite marks. We wish to avoid a situation in which a student's marks may be changed successively at different stages of the marking process. Examiners responsible for first marking may choose to highlight borderline marks on individual

assignments to second markers as a means of signalling a broad marking range. Any marks changed at this stage are normally justified by the second marker with comments on the assignment. We will use the moderation proforma next year in order to document any such changes separately.

We also welcome your suggestion to include more bonus marks in the marking scheme for the English to French translation paper and I have had the opportunity to discuss this with the module convenor for final-year language. We will ensure for next year that bonus marks are used systematically alongside negative marks, so that students' marks are not deflated overall, particularly at the lower end of the marking scale.

Finally, I should like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us. My colleagues and I very much look forward to working with you again in the year ahead.

With best wishes,

Senior Lecturer in French
Director of French Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Arts; School of Languages and Cultures
Subject(s):	<i>French</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Single and Joint Honours including French
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

Completed report

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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?

No

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 Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes of the programmes examined are completely commensurate with the standards appropriate for the award of a BA including French

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

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.*

I reviewed both language modules (FREN2010/2015 & FREN3010) and a range of social / political / cultural studies modules. In both cases, the assessment methods were entirely appropriate to the Intended Learning Outcomes. In terms of language, students were appropriately stretched in terms of their grammatical accuracy and fluency of expression over a range of exercises. In the 'content' modules, the coursework essays produced were on the whole highly analytical in nature and well versed in academic conventions. The best performances in the examinations for the content modules were outstanding in terms of their structure, detail and referencing.

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. Particular strengths in relation to students on comparable courses include (i) the performance of final year students in their translation into English examination. Students produced work of very good quality, translating complex texts into very readable and precise English (ii) the performance of students in examinations for content modules (see 3 above).

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. Please comment on 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 – first year of appointment

7. Please comment on 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.

(i) I reviewed FREN3375 Social and ideological change and FREN 2060/2065 (Aspects of French History) which were both well informed by current research in the field (ii) The Leeds French department has one of the widest range of 'content' modules informed by leading researchers in their respective fields that I have encountered in the country (iii) I reviewed work by students undertaking a dissertation module (FREN3790). The preparation for this research work provided by the department was extremely well structured and comprehensive. One of the dissertations that I was sent to read was of publishable quality and others included some excellent work both in terms of innovative ideas and approaches and adherence to academic conventions and rigour.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

N/A

9. 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, the documentation was very comprehensive and the examinations officer, <<>>, extremely helpful in <> guidance by email and in person on my visit to Leeds.

10. 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, marking criteria?

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

Yes.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Yes. This was a very well organised operation. I had plenty of time to consider all the papers and was given full information on each assessment. I had very minor comments to make which were fully considered and answered by colleagues.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

Yes. I was sent some dissertations to read in advance of my visit to Leeds. I was given a sample of language and content modules to review during this visit but all other work was available to me to review had I wished to do so. The scripts were exceptionally well marked. In particular, the language marking was meticulous. All marking was clear and fair. There was good evidence of exchange between first markers and moderators.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Yes. See 7 above. In addition, the system whereby the module convenor acted as second marker for all the dissertations provided an excellent degree of consistency in the marking process.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

I was able to attend the Board of Examiners for French in which module marks were reported and discussed. I did not attend the Classification Board. This board was very efficiently run on a 'paper-free' basis with good coordination between academic and support staff. The Board is not run on an anonymous basis as is the case in some institutions. I would commend this practice and encourage its continuation.

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

Yes – a separate Mitigating Circumstances committee had taken place prior to the Examination board and its recommendations reported at the Board. There was one minor issue – the Mitigating Circumstances committee had asked the Examinations board to adjudicate on the case of a particular student. However, the Examination board could not be told of the students' mitigating circumstances which made the process rather complex. The Department may wish to consider providing one of the external examiners with details of decisions made at the Mitigating Circumstances committee meeting for scrutiny and to involve said external examiner in any case on which the committee cannot come to a decision alone.

Other comments

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

From:
To:
Subject: FW: Response to examiner's report
Date: 06 August 2012 10:42:29

For info.

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
University of Leeds
LEEDS
LS2 9JT

-----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: 23 July 2012 16:29
To:
Subject: Response to examiner's report

Dear
Enclosed is my response to external examiner's report. It has been approved by

-----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: 23 July 2012 15:26
To:
Subject: Response to examiner's report

Dear
Please could you approve my response to our third external examiner's report below

Many thanks,

Dear

Many thanks for your first External Examiner's report. We are delighted that you commend our teaching and our assessment procedures so highly. We set great store by the range and quality of research-led modules we offer, and it is encouraging to see precisely these aspects being validated externally. Your comments on our students' high performance on content modules, on the translation into English paper and on the dissertation module are very much appreciated. Thank you also for commenting so favourably on the organisation and efficiency of our exams procedures.

I have discussed with the Examinations Officer for the School of Modern Languages your suggestion of involving an external examiner in some of the decisions made by the Mitigating Circumstances committee and this is a recommendation that we will definitely be taking forward to next year's examination boards. These comments are particularly welcome given our transition this year to a new unified School, with a new system for approving marks in French and modern languages.

Finally, I should like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us and we very much look forward to continuing to work with you over the next few years.

Best wishes,

Director of French Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT