

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

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

<b>School of:</b> Languages and Cultures	<b>Subject:</b> Italian
<b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> BA Level 2 BA Level 3	<b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> BA

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](mailto: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.*

***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.*

The Leeds University Italian Department was admirable at the beginning of my term as external examiner and it still is. In view of that, it should not be construed negatively if I say (as I do) that there has been no significant change, progressive development or enhancement of the learning and teaching provision during those years, at least in the parts of the syllabus with which I—as one of two external examiners—have been concerned. Leeds University attracts more than its fair share of excellent students of Italian, so the average standard achieved is high, and—as I have repeatedly reported—the Department's procedures, marking and assessment are all excellent.

## 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 for the programme are in my view highly appropriate, as are the programme's structure and content. The standards seem to me to be wholly appropriate for a BA programme.

**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 programme compares very favourably with similar ones in other 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 consists of a balance (and I think a well-judged balance) between course work and written and oral examinations. The arrangements for the assessment of modules and the classification of awards were excellent. The candidates' performance indicated a very high quality of teaching (though some staff give more emphasis than others to the detail of how written work should be presented).

**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.*

I was most impressed by the academic standards demonstrated by the candidates; as a cohort they did not display any noteworthy weaknesses, while attention to detail (clearly a result of outstanding tuition) could be cited as a notable strength. I think the candidates were given ample opportunity to demonstrate their achievements.

**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.*

I noted no improvement; but then, none was called for.

**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.*

It is clear that many of the modules are very directly (if partly) shaped by recent and current research by the scholars who deliver them.

## **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.*

I had ample access to assessment materials and was encouraged to request additional information.

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.*

I received all the documentation I could wish for. I do not perceive any incoherence in the policies or procedures relating to external examiners, which do appear to match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.

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, exemplary.

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

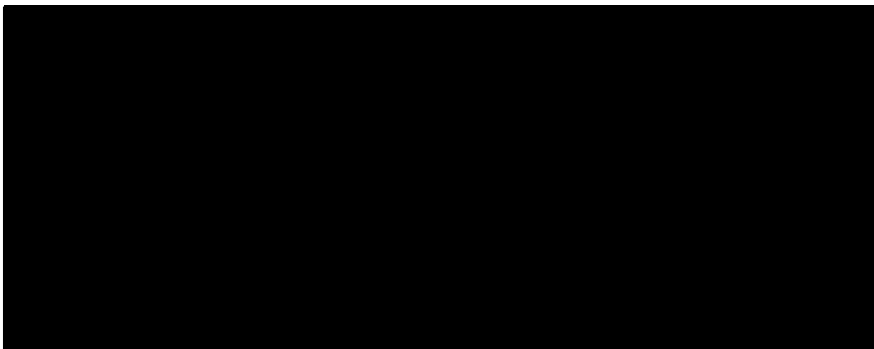
Yes.

### ***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***

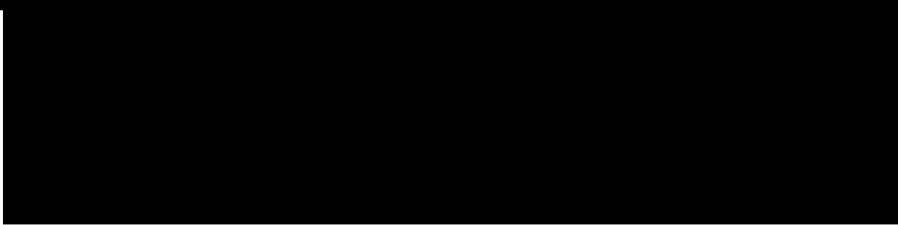
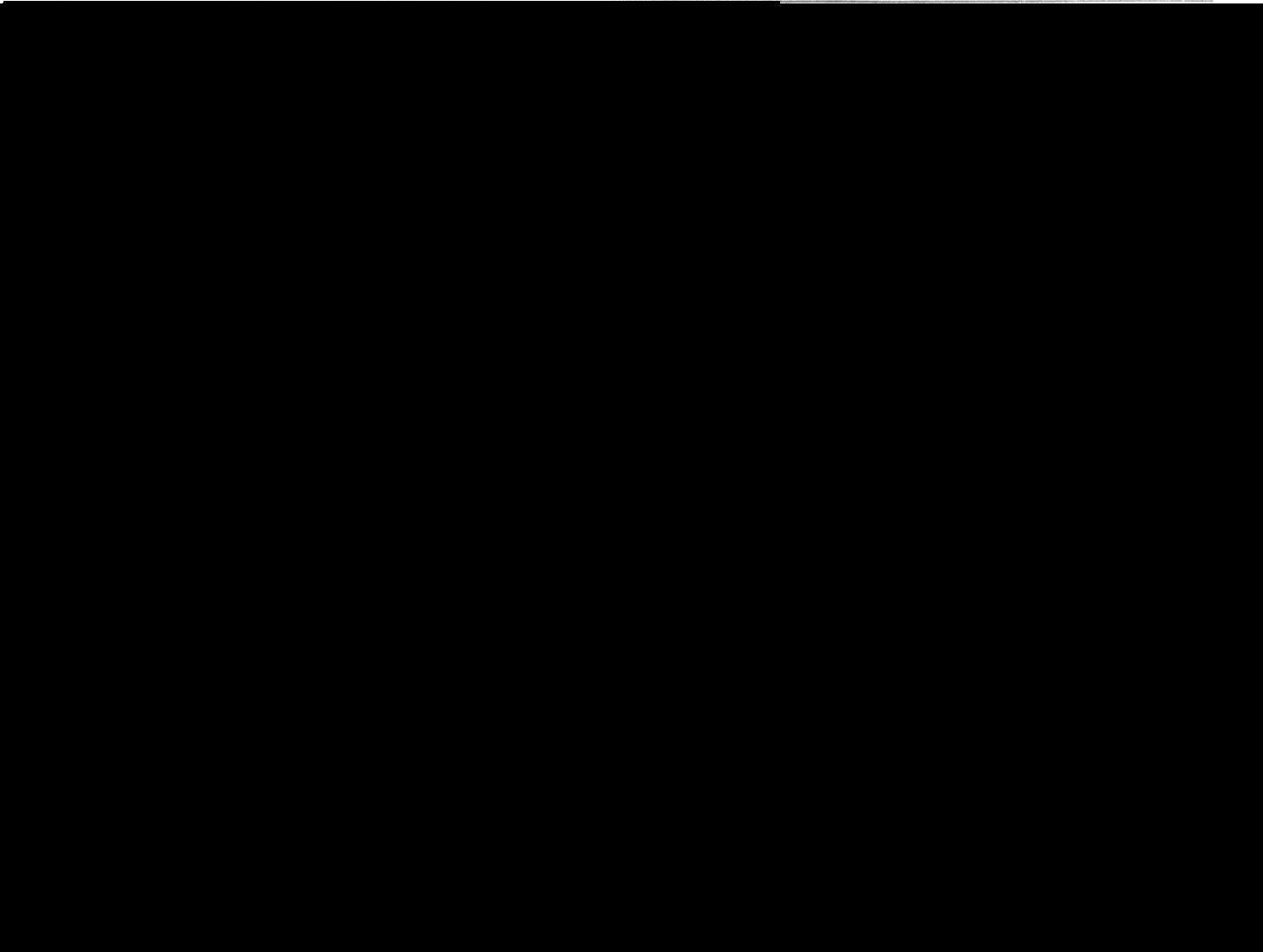
*Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form.*



I'm writing to thank you very warmly on behalf of my colleagues and myself for your external examiner's report for 2010-11. What you have to say about the continuing high standards of our learning and teaching provision and about the high level of student achievement is very encouraging. As for enhancement in the future, you might like to know that we are embarking on a thorough overhaul of our language syllabus at all levels.

Thank you, too, for all your help over the last four years. You have worked very hard and promptly to support our procedures and we have appreciated that greatly. We have really valued all your advice and of course we have enjoyed having you with us in Leeds.

With best wishes for the summer



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

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

<b>School of:</b>	<b>Modern Languages and Cultures</b>	<b>Subject(s):</b>	<b>Italian</b>
<b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b>	<b>All BA programmes including Italian</b>	<b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b>	<b>BA</b>

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**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.*

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?*

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.*

The standard of learning and teaching provision throughout my four-year tenure has been consistently high. The programme is innovative and research-led, providing an appropriate level of challenge for the best students and evidence of good support for less strong performers. The standards achieved by students compare well with those attained on comparable programmes at other institutions, with the top end of the range being consistent with the very best standards demonstrated nationally. Development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision has been most evident in the culture units, where students have benefited greatly from the very close relationship between teaching provision and individual staff research interests, as they have developed over the four years.

Assessment tasks have been well designed and the marking consistently scrupulous and fair. Evidence of discussion and negotiation between first and second markers was more directly available in the earlier part of my tenure as external, and it was very helpful to have that evidence to hand in adjudicating between examiners as well as in making an independent assessment of the standard achieved. I therefore encourage the department to again provide full evidence of negotiation between first and second markers and to ensure all agreed marks are noted on the exam or essay scripts as well as on mark sheets.

This issue aside, the standard of work attained by students and the quality of the feedback provided by staff indicate that the BA programme in Italian is in excellent health, its standards of teaching provision and student care are exemplary and its student achievements are of the highest quality.

## 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 learning outcomes were appropriate to both the structure and content of the BA in Italian (and Italian in all combinations), and the standards entirely appropriate for the award of BA.

### 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. The aims and ILOs met the expectations of the national subject benchmark. The modules examined suggest that the programme compares favourably with similar programmes at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

### 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.*

A range of assessment methods was available to students across the programme, and all assessment tasks were well designed.

The marking of modules was very fair, and there was some evidence of constructive communication between first and second markers, but I would encourage the department to ensure that all such evidence (comments from second markers, etc.) is available and all agreed marks noted on essay and exam scripts.

The arrangements for the classification of awards was very clear and very fair.

Student performance indicates that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods was high throughout the programme.

### 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. The academic standards demonstrated by students covered the full range of achievement, but the span is quite typical of the standards attained by students on comparable programmes at other institutions. The top end of the range is consonant with the very best standards demonstrated nationally, and throughout the programme, standards are appropriate to the degree awarded.

### 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.*

Enhancements to the programme since last year include the provision of more complex and challenging essay questions on the final year Calvino course; the change has resulted in a better spread of marks across the unit and a range of student attainment that is more evidently comparable with that on other final year courses.

### 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.*

There is very good evidence of research-led teaching at all levels of the degree programme. All courses are innovative, engaging and very well structured, and they provide students with access to the most recent research in the discipline area. A smaller number of students than usual have undertaken research through the dissertation this year option, but the level of achievement was good.

## ***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?**

Yes.

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.*


N/A

### ***Other Comments***

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

**In the case of language exams in particular, where practices vary greatly from one university to another, it is important that full documentation (marking scheme, etc.) relating to the marking process is available to the external examiners and that all marks awarded are noted on the exam scripts.**





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I'm writing to thank you very warmly on behalf of my colleagues and myself for your external examiner's report for 2010-11. What you have to say about the high standards of our learning and teaching provision and about the level of student achievement is very encouraging.

You mention the need for us to return to making explicit, on essays and exam scripts, the negotiations between first and second markers. Our internal instructions to examiners do ask colleagues to do this, but there has clearly been some slippage recently and the point will be stressed in 2011-12. We will also provide explicit documentation of internal marking schemes.

As you comment in B7, we had relatively few students taking the Italian dissertation (ITAL3090) this year: just two, in comparison with twelve last year. I think this was because we are now encouraging students to select topics linked with our own research, and evidently this approach did not have great appeal to the current year's cohort. However, we have seven students registered for this module in 2011-12, which is more like the normal number – and the number in 2009-10 was probably higher than usual because a taught module had to be withdrawn at the start of the first semester and some students chose to switch to a dissertation.

You might also like to know that we are embarking on a thorough overhaul of our language syllabus at all levels.

Thank you for all your help over the last four years. You have worked very hard and promptly to support our procedures and we have appreciated that greatly. We have really valued all your advice and of course we have enjoyed having you with us in Leeds.

