

**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>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> MODL1030 Introduction to World Cinema 1 MODL104001 Introduction to World Cinema 2MODL2230 Film Noir to Asian Extreme MODL3230 Cinema in the Digital Age	<b>Subject(s):</b> Film Studies/World Cinemas <b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> BA (hons)
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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.*  
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?*  
YES

***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.*

This is a very good year with a wide range of grades achieved across all modules – the full range of marking has been used throughout, in some cases from 20-90%, and fully deserved across this scale. From the evidence of the high quality of engagement with textual analysis in more than several cases across each unit that I have seen, this suggests high levels of teaching and interaction amongst staff and students pertaining to subject study matters. The learning outcomes and assessment are clear (though see my comments re learning outcomes and course identity in the final box below). The previous External Examiner had raised some concern about the structure and content of the modules and their overall cohesiveness in previous years. However, as he commented in his last report I too concur that there is continued evidence of cohesion and a common thread throughout the programme. The sustained attention to the study of World Cinemas as polycentric, democratic and cross-disciplinary, in a genuine grounded context of film and cultural theory, is the strength and distinctiveness of this course nationally. The standards are more than appropriate for 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. From the evidence of work that I have seen, communications with staff over email and discussions in person, the subject benchmarks are all being met in line with competitor 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.*

There is a good range of assessment methods in use and these are all more than satisfactory. However, the feedback received this year seemed to vary from the experience of the marker – PhD student, lecturer through to professor - (please see my comments in the final box below), but overall it is clear, constructive and more than appropriate. The use of the qualified internal moderator for each unit is an excellent quality control procedure and she/he was doing their job very well in most cases.

- 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. There is a range of assessments and a good variety of testing questions at the appropriate levels from years 1 to 3.

- 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.*

There is a sustained and continued through-line noticeable across all modules where the programme is brought together through a committed focus on questioning, interrogating and analysing all cinemas through a polycentric framework.

**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.*

All staff teaching on this programme are active researchers publishing at national and international levels. From the course handbooks, reading lists and essays and exams, there was evidence of staff engaging not only with their own work in the field, but also as their own work dialogues and critiques established orthodoxies in the fields of film studies and world cinema. There is also opportunity for young researchers and PhD students to make an active contribution to the teaching and assessment of the courses on offer.

***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. I received all material in good time and my comments and feedback on draft questions were all taken up collegially. As per the previous examiner's report, it might be a good idea for me to have access to Blackboard for the courses. This could be arranged for when I come up next, ahead of my second exam board perhaps.

**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, as above.

**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.*

I am listing here my observations and suggestions for improvement during the course of the next academic year. These were all pointed out and discussed with staff at the exam board.

1. The outcomes on the course handbooks need to be brought in line with either handbooks for the School or the Department as a whole. This will help in terms of students being able to identify more coherently with the degree programme as it develops from unit to unit and year to year. In some cases similar outcomes were being listed differently as 'learning outcomes' or 'knowledge outcomes' or 'outcomes' or 'methodology and skills outcome' – how are these the same or very different? Do you need to list them differently as such?
2. The written feedback should be more or less consistent in terms of what all markers are expected to provide to their students. In some cases, and it might have been PhD student teachers or younger lecturers, were just marking with ticks and crosses in some cases, and then providing very brief or no comments at the end of exam scripts. Other lecturers for the same assessment on their courses were offering much more clearer and detailed feedback. Perhaps there is a case here for senior or more experienced staff to supervise and guide younger staff in terms of assessment feedback.
3. In some cases the useful boxes on the assessment feedback sheets 'To do better next time' were not filled in and this was when students achieved varying grades from 66 to 75%.
4. There is a case to be made for an in-house Departmental or School wide study skills session on referencing, citations, and filmography and bibliography. In more than several cases the bibliographies and filmographies were combined as one; references used were not listed in alphabetical order, a system of footnotes and bibliography was used in a few essays, and some websites were not properly cited. Sometimes this was picked up by the marker but in some cases even when there were errors the marker/s had put down that the bibliography was fine.
5. It was suggested by the internal moderator for MODL2230 Film Noir that it might best for all staff to move to inputting their comments on the feedback sheets via word processor so that the comments are easily read by students and other staff. I would agree with this.
6. Perhaps this comment might be one for your 'Teaching and Learning Committee' or 'Assessments Meeting' or its equivalent at Leeds: The comment re 'Feedback Action Plan' encouraging students to reflect on the feedback received on the feedback sheet is excellent. But how does the Department or the School follow this up with students (weaker, average and very good to excellent students) to ensure that they understand the feedback, and are able to reflect and act on it? Is there any joined-up thinking and action going on here in the Dept or across the School as a whole?
7. There was discussion about the School of Modern Languages and the Institute for Communication Studies as joining forces and sharing modules as part of a wider overhaul and restructuring across the University. Whilst such moves are inevitable in the current climate across HE, it would be important for the World Cinema's team to keep an eye on retaining the distinctiveness of their programme and how, if at all, and in what ways it might be changed or developed as a result of new possible alliances in the University?

Finally, I would like to commend two courses in particular this year for being at the cutting edge of their teaching in terms of offering contemporary curricula, engaging theory, interesting design, and high levels of interaction from students: MODL104001 Introduction to World Cinema 2, and MODL3230 Cinema in the Digital Age.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

From the Centre for World Cinemas  
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

[Redacted]

University of Leeds  
Leeds LS2 9JT

Telephone 0113 243 1751  
Direct Line 0113 343 7069  
Fax 0113 343 3517

29 June 2011

[Redacted]

**Ref.: Reply to External Examiner's Report**

Dear [Redacted]

Thank you very much for your detailed and generous report on the 2010-11 performance of the Centre for World Cinemas' undergraduate elective and Joint Honours core modules, MODL1030 Introduction to World Cinema 1, MODL1040 Introduction to World Cinema 2, MODL2230 From Film Noir to Asia Extreme: Questioning Genre in World Cinema and MODL3230 Cinema in the Digital Era.

We are delighted with your positive evaluation, and in particular with your endorsement of our polycentric approach to film studies and the ways our courses question and advance scholarship in the field. Thank you also for the various helpful suggestions you make for improvement of our programme, which we would like to address individually:

- 1) **Granting access to our Blackboard system (VLE).** Our previous attempts to satisfy this request, made by your predecessor, have not been successful unfortunately. However, as there are constant changes and updates to our system, we will investigate this possibility once again.
- 2) **Consistent description of learning outcomes across all module handbooks.** In the last session, we have already brought MODL1040 Introduction to World Cinema 2 in line with the School's template for module description and

learning outcomes. We will certainly endeavour to adapt all other handbooks to the same template.

- 3) **Feedback consistency.** We will ensure feedback is detailed, clear and coherent across all modules and that lecturers are trained to that end. We will furthermore raise awareness among all tutors that marksheet boxes need to be ticked so as to accurately reflect written comments.
- 4) **Faulty referencing, formatting and style.** Our School is currently moving towards school-wide handbooks which include updated and consistent guidelines for referencing, formatting and style. We will make sure all our module handbooks direct students to these guidelines and recommend library sessions specifically devoted to this issue, so as to improve their referencing and formatting skills, in the specific field of film studies.
- 5) **Digitised feedback.** This problem has been already resolved, as all feedback sheets are now being word processed.
- 6) **Acting on feedback.** As for the query on how CWC acts on feedback given and received, all students are constantly encouraged to schedule personal meetings with their tutors to discuss their marks and feedback, in line with the University's 'Leeds for Life' programme. Students' feedback, in its turn, is discussed within the Learning & Teaching committee and acted upon as required. Our programme is committed to gauging students' feedback for each module and discussing it in detail, with a view to improving our courses and achieving students' maximum satisfaction. Since last year, this process has been conducted via Blackboard (VLE), with excellent results.
- 7) **Collaboration between CWC and ICS.** Indeed, this collaboration is in place, with several UG modules currently being shared as options across both units. We are aiming to expand this interaction, by introducing shared core modules and collaborative vocational MA programmes. However, we entirely agree with you on the importance of preserving our identity and distinctiveness as World Cinemas, and will rely on your valuable view in support of our label in future discussions.

Should you need any further clarification or information, please do not hesitate to contact me as per details above.

Yours truly,

