

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

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

Faculty / School of:

Modern Languages and Cultures

Subject(s):

Interpreting/Translation

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MACITS and MAIBSL

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

PG Cert/Pg Dip/MA**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

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

My experience has been generally positive. Both the Academic and Administrative staff have all been incredibly open to feedback and supportive of me in my role. The standards remain appropriately high amongst the Academic staff and the depth and range of assessments are impressive. In a time of uncertainty and questions about the HE sector they are to be commended for keeping their standards and commitment to the students high. The Centre Director, <> should also be commended for <> excellent leadership of such a fine team. I was honoured to serve at External Examiner for these outstanding programmes, As mentioned previously, the main negative area was the closing of the MA in BSL/English Translation, truly a loss to both the University and the profession.

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 are of a standard expected at the postgraduate level both at the module and programme level.

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 ILO's are equivalent to other postgraduate courses Interpreting as well as standards for Conference Interpreting.

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 assessment methods are indeed reflective of the expectation for working professional interpreters. The marking is consistent across the programmes and it is clear that the standards for passing are appropriate for entry into the profession. As stated previously, it is obvious that members of the academic staff are highly proficient teachers as well as practitioners who hold themselves and their students to the highest professional standards; they should be commended for this.

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.*

Overall the students were of a good standard. For those students who did not pass (either at the module or the programme level) the deficiencies were clear and reasons for not passing were appropriate and clearly articulated. In addition, alternate progression routes (e.g. exit/fall back awards) are clearly mapped out.

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 use of live interpretation for assessments is an accurate reflection of actual working conditions in the profession and are be an excellent way to ascertain a student's skill set and ability to be a success in the profession.

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 curriculum reflects current work in the field and students are given opportunities to be exposed to those doing cutting edge research.

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.*

The access I was given allowed me to see the range of student performance across the programmes.

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.*

The materials I were given were helpful and accurately reflected the programmes.

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

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

Yes

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; the staff communicated with me clearly and in a timely manner.

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

Yes. As in the past, it was clear that staff are aware of how mitigating circumstances can affect student performance and are clearly sensitive to such issues.

Other comments

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

As stated many times previously, the loss of the MA in British Sign language/English Interpreting is truly a loss for the profession in the UK.

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

FACULTY OF ARTS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

18 March 2014

Dear

Many thanks for your report on our postgraduate interpreting programmes for 2012-13.

I am glad that you find our intended learning outcomes to be appropriate and that our assessment methods reflect the standards expected of professional interpreters.

While I am also pleased that you note the overall good standard of student performance, I am reassured that you find that alternative progression routes are clearly mapped out for those students who do not pass the programme for which they initially registered. Similarly, I appreciate your comments about our handling of circumstances which merit mitigation.

I am delighted by your observation that the colleagues involved in teaching interpreting are at once highly proficient teachers and practitioners well-placed to maintain the highest professional standards. I note also your observation about the value of using live material in assessments, to reflect accurately working conditions.

At the same time I am also glad that you comment on the role of current research in informing our curriculum and in the opportunities afforded to our students.

Finally, as I have said on previous occasions, I concur with your view that the closure of MAIBSL represents a significant loss to the profession and will continue to work with colleagues to address this in future – and also to ensure the provision of high quality postgraduate vocational training in other specialisms.

With kind regards,

Director of Translation Studies