

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

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

School	Modern Languages	Subject(s):	French	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	French	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)	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.*

None, the programme should be encouraged to continue and expand its current considerable strength

***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.*

Aims and objectives were appropriate and 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. The standards compare favourable with those of other institutions with which I am familiar.

**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 methods and marking were extremely thorough. Student performance suggest a range of abilities, including some at the very highest end of the scale.

**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. Student strength lies in the variety of the courses completed, allowing them to gain knowledge and competence across the chronological and genre scales with respect to French culture.

**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.*

As above: the variety of course on offer covering the full chronological and genre scales.

**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.*

This is a particular strength. Most of the options are research-led and as such allow a two-way dialogue with advanced-level research. This benefits staff who develop their ideas, but also students, who are part of the process of subject development.

## ***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, entirely.

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, to be commended,

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

Yes.

### ***For Examiners involved in Mentoring Arrangements***

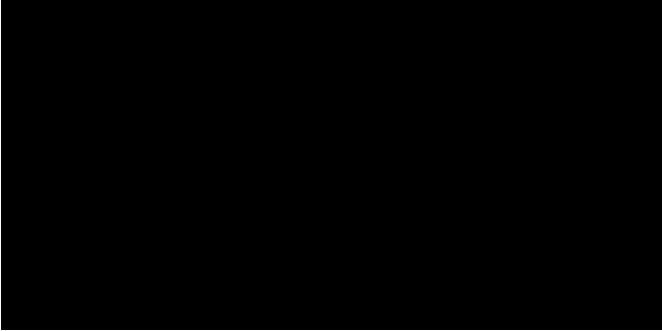
*If you have acted as a mentor to a new external examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements.*

N/A

### ***Other Comments***

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

Once again the Department is to be commended for the outstanding work it does and the top-scale level of student experience provided. In particular the wide range of research led options is a particular strength which should be built upon and if possible expanded.



29 July 2011

Dear 

Many thanks for your External Examiner's report.

We are delighted that you commend our teaching and our assessment procedures so highly, and we note in particular your very positive comments about the strong influence of research on our curriculum, the advantages of the chronological breadth we offer and the high quality of the student experience we provide. We set great store by precisely these aspects of what we do, and it is therefore very encouraging to see them being validated externally.

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 look forward to working with you again in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely



**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>Subject(s):</b> French
<b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> FREN2170/2175; FREN2190/2195; FREN2250/2255; FREN2200/2205; FREN2310/2315; FREN3010; FREN3480; FREN3555; FREN3621; FREN3780; FREN3740; FREN3751;	<b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> BA

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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.*

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.*

## 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 programme aims and ILOs are absolutely appropriate for a BA in French at a top-ranking University.

- 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.*

The evidence provided by the students' work and the assessment material suggests that both assessment and teaching methods are of very high quality.

- 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. 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 was impressed at a number of modules not offered the previous year for reasons of staff availability which enhance still further the already excellent range of modules on offer in the programme. One of these (FREN3740) was particularly innovative in its requirement that students studying autobiographical writing should attempt a piece of autobiographical writing themselves and comment on the challenges it presented. The degree of critical reflection apparent in the students' commentaries was very pleasing and represents an example of excellent practice.

- 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 teaching in Leeds is clearly research-led. The advantage of having a big department relative to other French Departments means not only that a wide range of modules is available to students but also that colleagues can to a marked extent teach to their own research interests.

## **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 no need to request additional information; all was clear in advance.

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 – the entirety of the students' written work was available for inspection. There was one script I was unable to locate in FREN2170/2175; however, this was doubtless an issue of filing/sorting rather than of availability; see my comment below about the ordering of scripts.

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

Administrative arrangements were exemplary.

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

Yes: the Examination Board considered mitigating circumstances not only in the case of borderline candidates, as is increasingly common, but for all students who had submitted evidence of them.

### ***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.*

The impression I formed last year that the Leeds Department of French offers an excellent BA to its students has been confirmed this year. The teaching is diverse, stimulating and research-led, and clearly encourages students to develop a range of transferable skills. Overall, the students demonstrate a high level of achievement, comparable with the best being achieved nationally. I would repeat the comment I made previously that this level of student attainment is all the more remarkable for being achieved with such a high student-staff ratio, suggesting a very high level of commitment to their teaching by members of staff.

I was pleased to note that my recommendation that External Examiners no longer be involved as primary examiners (rather than moderators) in the Oral examinations was implemented. I also note that my suggestion that a coversheet giving an overall picture of the breakdown of marks should be provided for each course had been followed up. This was very helpful since it enabled the Externals to assess comparability between courses more easily and to target their attention more efficiently on the borderline cases in each course. It would be helpful if the scripts could further be arranged in the

order given on the spreadsheet and, given the amount of moderation to be done in just one day, if course convenors could extract in advance the scripts they wish the External to consider. This is especially the case in relation to Second Year courses where there can be up to four different piles of elements per course with no obvious order.

The only other observation I would make is that the very best students at Leeds may in my view be slightly disadvantaged at national level relative to students in other institutions by the requirement to write their Final year course essays in French. For example, I read a number of essays where the content was indubitably of a quality submissible to the Gapper prize awarded annually by the Society for French Studies, but where the number of grammatical mistakes militated against the likelihood of success if they were to be put forward. Since the quality of the French is not itself assessed, the Department may wish to consider whether the benefits to the students of having to write the essays in French are outweighed or not by the reduction in the number of essays standing a strong chance of success in such competitions.

In conclusion, I remain of the opinion that the provision in French at BA level places is excellent in every respect at Leeds. I would like to thank colleagues, both academic and administrative, for their efforts to make the task of moderating the examinations as smooth as possible and also, especially, for their hospitality and warm welcome.





27 July 2011

Dear 

Many thanks for your second External Examiner's report.

We are delighted that you commend our teaching and our assessment procedures so highly, judging our provision to be excellent in every respect. 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 also very grateful to you for your appreciation of the challenges we face, as you rightly note that our high levels of student attainment are achieved in the context of a high student/staff ratio. We are glad, too, that you found that the changes we have made to our procedures this year – made in the light of your report last year – have worked well, and we will ensure that next year there is even greater clarity in how scripts are presented to you for inspection.

We note your observation on the language of assessment in final-year modules. My personal view is much the same as yours: that we are muddying the waters, and perhaps even disadvantaging our students in some respects, by forcing them to complete some of their final-year assessment in content modules in French, even though (quite rightly) such assessment is not actually a language exercise. However, I know some other colleagues see the matter differently. I can therefore confirm that we will discuss this question and review our policy collectively early in the new session, mindful that any decisions we take in French need to be seen in the broader context of the School.

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.

Yours sincerely



**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> Modern Languages	<b>Subject(s):</b> French
<b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> BA French and Joint Honours	<b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> BA

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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.*

***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.*

There has been year on year progress during my period of appointment. I have seen growth in the variety of options available to the students, improvement in the methods of assessment and feedback, and standards of achievement in the work produced by the students that have been consistently high.

## 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 programme at Leeds attracts highly qualified students and what is expected of them is suitably demanding for a BA honours degree. The degree is well-structured, combining rigour with variety, and succeeds in producing well-rounded graduates.

### 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 Leeds French department is one of the foremost in the country and its aims and ILOs underscore that position.

### 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 combine fairness and flexibility, allowing teaching staff to innovate while giving students a clear appreciation of what is expected of them. All the student work that I have seen testifies to the fact that the students were well taught, and encouraged to fulfil their potential. Consequently, the vast majority of students perform well, and a solid cohort performs outstandingly.

### 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.*

The standards achieved by the students would appear very favourably in any national comparisons. Leeds graduates are particularly strong in terms of their exposure to the breadth of approaches and subject areas that constitute French Studies. There has been notable innovation in the attempt to address the frailties in written language characteristic of all school-leavers with A level French.

### 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.*

The programme has clearly benefited from regular reviews, consistently offering a rich variety of well-focused modules to students. I have been particularly impressed by the ongoing endeavour to expand, standardise and improve the feedback to students, thus enhancing their performance.

### 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 members of staff in the department are engaged in a wide variety of research areas and this has shaped the rewarding range of options available to the students.

## **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 was provided with all the material I needed to make informed and balanced judgements.

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 was given a very clear sense of what was required of me.

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.*

### **Other Comments**

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

*The colleagues in the French department were unfailingly accommodating and responsive in helping me to discharge my duties as an external examiner. What I have observed over the last 4 years is the highly professional delivery of a programme that is rich, dynamic and in tune with student expectations. In terms of the student experience offered, and the adaptability to an increasingly competitive market in difficult times, Leeds French is a very good window for Leeds University and for the discipline of French Studies. I sincerely hope that the University will support the department with the human and material resources it needs in order to prosper and consolidate its position as a leader nationally.*

27 July 2011

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 positive developments in the course of your four years as External, particularly in terms of assessment and feedback, and we note with great satisfaction your view of our programme as being rich, dynamic and in tune with student expectations. We are also very grateful to you for your appreciation of the challenges we face, and 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 Department of 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.

Yours sincerely

**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 Linguistics <b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> French	<b>Subject(s):</b> <b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</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.*

***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.*

Overall over the 4 years in which I have served as extern for the French Department at Leeds I have found standards which are no less than world class in every aspect of the work of the department. The department offers an impressive range of courses taught by people who are world class researchers in their fields, resulting in a stimulating programme in French Studies which fits students for a wide range of careers from academic careers to teaching to a broad range of business and functionary roles. The staff work to the highest standards and give of themselves unstintingly for the benefit of the students. They are supportive and encouraging. And all of this while producing an outstanding body of research, and maintaining international profiles.

There is constant monitoring of standards and procedures by the academics. From an already excellent

standard, some courses changed in minor ways during the past four years. There has been more choice of topics in several of the exams. Changes in the oral exams have improved focus on phonetics. More documentation has been added to the already excellent information provided to the students.

Students emerging for Leeds with degrees in French are capable of competing with students from any top French departments in the UK and Ireland. Their language skills are superb and their intellectual training and critical thinking as well as their intercultural awareness fits them for whatever career paths they may choose.

## 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 of the courses were clear, and the documentation was comprehensive

Marking schemes were appropriate.

All three language exercises were marked meticulously, many double marked. The evaluative remarks and statements on the scripts were detailed and well matched to the stated aims of the courses. It is clear that the students were apprised of the aims and objectives of the course, well taught and appropriately examined.

• The documentation on the course indicated a thoroughness of approach as well as a high level of detail in preparation of the students for examination. The levels of difficulty for both 'theme' and 'version' were appropriate, permitting the better students to show a range of ability without being beyond the reach of the weaker ones.

Resume well taught- a difficult exercise- involving other cognitive skills not necessarily strictly linguistic.

### 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, all aims and ILOs were appropriate.

### 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.*

Marking schemes were appropriate.

All three language exercises were marked meticulously, many double marked. The evaluative remarks and statements on the scripts were detailed and well matched to the stated aims of the courses. It is clear that the students were apprised of the aims and objectives of the course, well taught and appropriately examined.

While the range of marks was the expected curve, there were some stellar performances. In general student performance indicates excellent teaching and learning procedures in the Department.

As indicated elsewhere marking arrangements are excellent.

### 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 examination tasks were imaginative and provided opportunities for the more brilliant performers to demonstrate their prowess and yet provided sufficient space for the more average students to perform well.

One observation I had was that the obligation to write content paper in French might slightly depress marks. The students are more than adequately tested on a wide range of language skills in their language papers, so permitting them to express themselves more fully in their first language would result in no loss of language training.

### 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.*

The language modules are continually under review and are constantly improved. I know that on my recommendation more attention was given to pronunciation by highlighting some phonetic traits. There is constant discussion of the nature of courses



and of pedagogical approaches to the delivery of these courses. The content courses are continually updated with input from the world class research of the academics who teach them

## **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 outstanding research record of the academics in the French department informs both the content and the delivery of their courses as is apparent from the performance of their students. In areas particularly where I am a specialist (second language acquisition, linguistics and Canadian Studies) I can say without hesitation, that the content of the students work demonstrates input from groundbreaking state of the art world class research.

The students work shows both theoretical and practical knowledge of their fields.

For example, the practice of writing lengthy assessment essays permits students to begin to learn the skills of research which they might well use in their careers or as postgraduate students.

## **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.*
  - 
  - The papers were meticulously presented with helpful indications from the instructors where externs input was requested, as well as indications of prior double marking. The forms designed for this purpose were most helpful in expediting this process which resulted in highly efficient use of the externs' time.
  - Explanations from the Head of department and administrator were extremely clear and helpful.
  - The current system of having externs focus on particular areas in 'rolling' fashion results in a careful on-going appraisal of different areas of the programme.
  -
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.*
  - 
  - The documentation on the course indicated a thoroughness of approach as well as a high level of detail in preparation of the students for examination.
10. **Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

Yes. The externs were provided with ample amounts of material on all courses. All papers –both exams and continual assessments were available. These were presented in an orderly fashion with indications of where they had been internally moderated and where external moderatorship was requested

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

Impeccable arrangements by the Head of Department, the administrator and all of the staff. The Board was conducted impeccably.

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

All mitigating circumstances were given careful consideration

### ***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.*

Professor Vera Regan  
School of Languages and Literatures  
University College Dublin  
Belfield  
Dublin 4  
Ireland

27 July 2011

Dear Vera

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 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. We are very glad, too, that our increased emphasis on phonetics in final-year language classes – a development introduced in direct response to your report last year – has, in your view, already borne fruit this year.

We note your observation on the language of assessment in final-year modules. My personal view is much the same as yours: that we are muddying the waters, and perhaps even disadvantaging our students in some respects, by forcing them to complete some of their final-year assessment in content modules in French, even though (quite rightly) such assessment is not actually a language exercise. However, I know some other colleagues see the matter differently. I can therefore confirm that we will discuss this question and review our policy collectively early in the new session, mindful that any decisions we take in French need to be seen in the broader context of the School.

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.

Yours sincerely

Professor Russell Goulbourne  
Head of the Department of French