

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

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

School of: Education Programme(s) / Module(s): MA TESOL	Subject(s): awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)
--	---

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.

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?

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.

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 are appropriate to the level of the award and the structure and content of the programme are appropriate to the type of 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.*

The aims and ILOs are comparable to those of similar course at other universities and in line with benchmarks set by the HEQ framework.

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.*

Students are assessed by assignment and these are generally suited to the subject. The standard of work produced is generally of a high standard and comparable to that of students on similar programmes. The best work is where students contextualise their research and draw on local constraints in their discussions.

However, it might be useful to consider providing alternative methods of assessment for some modules. This would be in line with current thinking on equal opportunities in assessment and would give a greater number of students the opportunity to perform to their strengths.

The quality of teaching seems strong. Students indicated in discussions that they gained a good deal from attending lectures and seminars and were given plenty of opportunity to discuss and to develop their ideas.

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 students are generally of a high standard. However, on the module, Teaching and Learning for TESOL, there was a very high number of fails at first attempt. This pattern was not mirrored on other modules. It might be worth considering why this was the case.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

NA

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.

This is my first year as external examiner of this programme. However, there are two areas of good practice for which the team should be particularly commended. First, the support given to students on a one-to-one basis is excellent: students are able to submit drafts of work and to discuss drafts with tutors. Second, students are encouraged to draw on their own experiences in the assignments, which helps them to make clear links between theory and 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.

Many of the modules are led by tutors who research in the field they are teaching. This ensures that the content is research-led and current. The Critical Study module encourages students to carry out their own research project and so develop practical skills in this area.

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. This is good.

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?**

The administrative arrangements have been excellent.

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.

1st February 2012

Dear

Thank you very much for your report on the MA TESOL programmes in the School of Education, and for the work you have carried out as the external examiner.

We are particularly pleased that you have singled out the support we give to students on the Leeds MA TESOL programme. We strive to provide a high level of academic and pastoral support for our students, and feel this is reflected in their positive attitude towards the TESOL programmes.

We are also very happy that you have found the administrative procedures associated with external examining to be efficient. Our administration team works very hard to ensure that things work well, and your comment helps serve to validate the efforts they make.

We note your point about the possibility of alternative methods of assessment for some modules. The TESOL team is glad you have raised this issue and will discuss it at meetings through the coming year.

You also draw attention to the high number of fails on the module EDUC5901M Teaching and Learning in TESOL, a pattern not seen in other modules. The TESOL team discussed this issue at a recent awayday. They identified the challenging content at an early stage in the programme as contributing to the disappointing set of marks, and will monitor this carefully.

Ethical issues surrounding the MA TESOL (China) are addressed in the critical study preparation session in March. Students are aware of ethical issues and this has impacted on their research design. We will highlight the need to report on their considerations of ethical issues in the hand book and in the critical study preparation sessions.

Yours sincerely

Head, School of Education