

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014**

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

Faculty / School of:	POLIS
Subject(s):	<i>International Development</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	PIED 1212 Making of the Modern World, PIED 2205 Development Practice, PIED 2211 Development and Social Change, PIED 2448 Politics of Contemporary China, PIED 3230 Gender and Violence, PIED 3261 Violence and Reconciliation in Africa, PIED Dissertations, PIED 2--- North-South Linkages, PIED ----- Land, Fuel and Agriculture, PIED ----- Pacific Asia, PIED ----- State and Politics in Africa.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Various

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****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](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Quality Assurance**  
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?*

**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*

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## 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.*

Programme aims and ILOs are appropriate and of high quality.

### 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.*

There is no national benchmark in International Development- but the modules examined compare with those taught in other programmes that I am familiar with.

### 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 modes have diversified in the three years in which I have been examining. For instance, a 6000 word research proposal and report was put in for the module, Land, Fuel and Agriculture. This is to be welcomed does have work load implications for staff. It was also noted that weaker students sometimes struggle with new modes of assessment, but it is good to stretch student's expectations with more diversity. Assessment marking in modules is very rigorous – feedback given to students is consistently detailed and points out where even the best students can further extend their performance.

The work produced by the vast majority of students is very good and excellent. Where it is not, it appears to be where students have not been engaging or may have English as a second language. This would suggest that teaching, learning and assessment are of high quality and encourage good performance.

The administration and conduct of the classification of awards is meticulous and highly professional. Each student is treated as an individual and mitigating circumstances are investigated with an exceptional degree of thoroughness.

### 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 students are very strong as a cohort. This may be due to the nature of the intake. Students are clearly confident in reading and writing critically. They often appear to be passionately interested in the subject matter and to have read and thought widely. There is a small tail end of weaker performance, in some cases this seems to relate to the use of English as a second language.

### 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.*

More diversity in assessment clearly stretches students and encourages different (and perhaps more employability) skills. It can unsettle students who are used to the usual essay/exam combination. Hence it is good that assessment innovation is being used in a limited range of modules, but it would be good to continue to experiment with this shift.

### 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.*

Research clearly influences the modules- content is continually being revised and updated and engages with the most contemporary debates.

**8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

N/A

**For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements**

**9. 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**

**10. 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

**11. 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.*

Yes- administrative support provided by \_\_\_\_\_ is excellent.

**12. 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- vast majority of questions are suitable. Where I had very minor comments then these were dealt with very effectively.

**13. 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- all materials were clearly marked- a variety of methods – coversheets and electronic formats being used. All clearly showed marking and comments by different examiners.

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

Yes- some excellent work produced.

**15. 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- I attended the meeting and was highly impressed by the conduct of staff and the process. The engagement of academic staff is very professional and shows the value attributed to teaching in Leeds. Administrative management of the process was outstanding.

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

Yes- the process is exceptionally detailed and thorough. The extra consideration of cases in a pre-meeting with Externals present is further evidence for the seriousness with which this is approached.

**Other comments**

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

29 October 2014

Dear

**External Examiner's Report 2013 – 2014**

On behalf of the School, may I thank you for your Examiner's Report which was discussed by colleagues at the POLIS Taught Student Education Committee meeting on the 8 October 2014.

Your report was very positive overall and your comments about the "outstanding" administrative management of the process are much appreciated. I note also your welcome for the greater diversity of assessment methods over the last three years. You recommended that we continue to innovate with assessment methods and we are doing so both on newly introduced modules and on existing ones. You can be sure we will be working hard to maintain the high standards that you have noted.

You raised the issue of students who have English as a second language. They do arrive of course with the requisite language qualifications in line with University requirements and such students can also take in-session English courses should that be necessary and can also attend the Skills Centre. We also induct such students via our 'Studying and Researching in POLIS' module, covering essay writing and other study skills. We hope that we can identify and work with students who need to improve their language skills in ways that help them to make the most of their time at Leeds and do themselves justice in their exams and assessments.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the time and effort that you have invested as our external examiner in ensuring that the programmes and modules offered by POLIS are commensurate with the standards offered in comparable institutions.

Yours sincerely

**Head of School**