

**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>Politics and</b> <b>International</b> <b>Studies</b> <b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> <b>Global Development</b> <b>Global Development &amp; Education</b> <b>Global Development &amp; Gender</b> <b>Global Development and African</b>	<b>Subject(s):</b>  <b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> <b>MA</b>
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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?*

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.*

It has been possible to identify steady progress here in a number of important areas, including greater coherence and consistency in marking on team-taught courses. Other aspects of good practice have been in evidence throughout, particularly the high-quality and extensive feedback offered to students on their written work. The level of feedback to students is particularly impressive and stands out in relation to similar courses that I am familiar with at three comparator departments.

A key feature of most of these programmes is their dedicated or 'niche' focus, which each responds directly to a core area of development policy and practice. This is important and valued by students as it invests their studies with a degree of expertise and job-market relevance. It is also an important marketing strategy, as the more provincial universities (i.e. vis-à-vis London) are not in the position of being able to offer big broad programmes in the expectation that the location and reputation will do the trick. The fact that these programmes have been carefully organised into an umbrella programme means that efficiencies of scale are being attained.

## 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 modules that I looked at were well constructed and covered a good range of relevant material, involving a good balance between critical and policy-relevant material, and with good global coverage.

### 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 programmes compare well with similar programmes in other departments 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.*

The assessments were largely appropriate, although in some instances students could have been encouraged more directly to review critical debates more thoroughly, particularly in theoretical terms, and perhaps been set more challenging questions that cut across the range of the course material. There was noticeable improvement regarding longer assignments where students received a stronger level of guidance. There is generally a very good level of feedback from markers: comprehensive and constructive.

### 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: particularly on those courses where students were offered the chance to formulate their own question in discussion with the course convenor.

### 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.*

Level and type of feedback; there are also some innovative assessments involving more practical forms of activity (e.g. Project Proposals on Development Management) that work well.

### 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.*

It seems clear that several modules are research-led in terms of their being closely associated with the research interests of particular staff and in that they include good examples of recent research in reading lists and lectures (e.g. case-studies). This is generally positive and seems to work well, and is particularly appropriate at masters level.

## **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.

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.

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.*

20 March 2012

Dear

**MA External Examiner's Report 2010 – 2011**

On behalf of the School, may I thank you for your Examiner's Report which was discussed by colleagues at the School Education Committee on the 22 February 2012.

We note with satisfaction your positive comments on our "high quality and extensive feedback" and on the "well-constructed" modules and programmes in this area. Your remarks about assessments are very welcome. You praised the evidence of "innovative assessments" but said you would like to see students encouraged to review critical debates more thoroughly, particularly in theoretical terms. The programme team will be taking this advice onboard. Your comments on the greater coherence and consistency in marking on team-taught courses are welcome. You can be assured that we will be working to maintain the strengths of these programmes as they are reorganised over the next year or so.

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**