

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

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Subject area and awards being examined:

School of:	Subject(s):
Programme(s) / Module(s): Gender Studies	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)
	MA

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?

No

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 intended learning outcomes and aims were both appropriate commensurate with the award. Standards were also appropriate for the award under consideration.

- 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 programme compared well in relation to other institutions.

- 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.*

Design and structure of the assessment methods and marking arrangements were appropriate in relation to aims and outcomes. Given the high number of firsts given in the modules the quality of teaching/assessment methods was clearly very good.

- 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, academic standards were very high, and student performance was comparable, if not better, to those at other institutions. The number of students gaining distinctions/merit was high, given the relatively small cohort size, but overall, their work warranted this. One student only gained a PG DIP, rather than an MA, but I was satisfied this was a fair outcome.

- 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.

This is my first year. But good practice was seen in the enthusiasm for the course from tutors, and in the care clearly given to aid and assist students.

- 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.

Staff are at the forefront of their field in the area of gender, and the curriculum reflected this in terms of the up to date material and subjects engaged with. Given staff's expertise in Queer theory, for example, care needs to be taken that students not engaging in these perspectives are not penalised in their work. (Though, so far, I did not find evidence of this happening.) Given the contemporary relevance of masculinity to the field, it would be useful if the body of literature in this area was engaged in by students, where it is both relevant and appropriate to the curriculum.

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.*

This was fine.

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. My duties performed matched the policies and procedures for external examiners.

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.

I was impressed with the passion and care regarding both the curriculum and student progression/welfare shown by academic staff. The curriculum was interesting and research led. It was good to see a range of international students in the cohort. Work was of a high standard, though it may have been an exceptional cohort this year. Though I did not change any marks, and it was good to see staff making use of the full grade range for first class marks, it would be useful for tutors marking student work to discuss the awarding of first class marks, so they are operating within the same criteria. (This is especially relevant when marks go into the 80+ range.) I would urge the university to continue to fully support this course/Centre, given its clear international relevance and appeal, and high academic standards.

20th January 2011

Dear <<<>>>

I am writing on behalf of the School to acknowledge receipt of your external examiners report for 2010/11 and to thank you for your welcome contribution to the work of the School.

I would also like to thank you for your positive comments on our MA Gender Studies programmes and the quality of the work of our students. The programme team is particularly encouraged that you noted the high standard of the students' work and for your acknowledgement of the high standard of our programmes and research led curriculum. I would like to assure you that we will continue to maintain these standards.

I have noted your suggestions regarding the equitable application of the marking criteria and I would like to assure you that the School is in the process of reviewing this across all of our taught postgraduate provision.

May I once again thank you for your much valued contribution. I hope you have enjoyed your first year with us as external examiner.

Yours sincerely,

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Head of School

Sociology and Social Policy

University of Leeds

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LS2 9JT