

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

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

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	<i>Islamic Studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Introduction to Arabic Language, Essential Skills in Arabic, Introduction to Islam, Music in Muslim Society and Women, Culture and Islam.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

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.

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?

All the relevant External Examiners' reports were provided before I came for the Exam Board and so were the responses 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.*

In my opinion all the Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate for the modules I examined and also for the structure and content of the programme. The programme is taught to appropriate standards for the award of a certificate.

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 programme's aims and ILOs meet the expectation of other national institutions and against the national subject (RS) benchmark. It is a well-designed and structured programme with teaching done at an appropriate standard.

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 quality of the marking is very good across the range of modules. They are fair and equitable and are appropriate to the ILOs. The feedback by the tutors is appropriate and of good standard.

The assessments are very well structured and have a good variety with exams, essays, presentation and question-answer booklet. The assessments demonstrate that students are learning a very wide range of topics with good knowledge and critical ability. The progressive teaching of the modules across the year is demonstrated within the work of the students between the two semesters.

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 assessments of the students in the variety of modules demonstrate good academic standards at the Certificate level. The marks vary between pass and a first across all the modules, which is to be expected from a group of nine students from varied background. The assessments show that students have overall good access to academic resources and ability to analyse and be critical within academia.

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.

N/A

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.

The variety of modules in the programme demonstrates a good balance between traditional modules such as 'Introduction to Islam' to innovative modules such as 'Music in Muslim Society'.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. 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

9. 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.*

As the External Examiners I had sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and I was encouraged to request additional information if needed.

10. 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.*

All appropriate documents were received.

11. 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?

I was provided with draft examination papers/assessments and the questions were all appropriate

12. 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?

Sufficient assessed work was made available to me and the scripts were clearly marked for me to give an evaluation of them.

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

N/A

14. 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?

I was able to attend the exam board and I was satisfied with operation of it.

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

Yes, they were.

Other comments

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

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25th November 2013

Dear <>,

External Examiner's Report for 2012-13

As usual at this time of year, we have been reflecting carefully on the feedback that we receive from our External Examiners and from student surveys. In the light of this, I am now writing to each of our examiners to respond to the observations that you make in your report and to give you a broader sense of our plans for 2013-14.

Thank you for your first report as External Examiner of our Certificate of Higher Education in Islamic Studies. We appreciate the care that you have taken in reviewing students' work and giving us feedback. I know that <> and <> team have valued their conversations with you and your sympathetic engagement with the programme and what we are trying to achieve in widening participation.

We are very pleased to find that you have formed a positive view of the Certificate in your first year as External Examiner. We note that you judge the programme to be appropriate in terms of its content, standards, delivery and assessment strategy. In particular, you observe that the curriculum represents a "good balance" between traditional and innovative modules and that assessments are well structured and appropriately varied. We are particularly encouraged to see that you find evidence of progression across the year in students' assignments with "good knowledge and critical ability" that suggests, "good access to academic resources and ability to analyse and be critical within academia."

During 2013-14 we shall be delivering, for the first time, the second year modules of the new Certificate and supporting students in their progression towards level 2 of the BA Islamic Studies within the Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies department. Our challenge will be to sustain the high quality of the programme and student experience for both year groups as our provision develops and we look forward to the valuable contribution that you can make to this in your feedback from an external perspective.

Looking more broadly, I enclose for your information a summary of feedback from our other External Examiners. As you will see, your positive evaluation of our learning and teaching, feedback and support for students is shared across the range of examiners. Where points have been raised for further development, these are not only being addressed within the relevant programme but are also implemented, wherever appropriate, across our provision as a whole.

Feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Survey continues to show a very positive picture. We are particularly pleased to note steady improvement in satisfaction scores in virtually all areas for both surveys and, with it, the suggestion that high overall satisfaction is well grounded in students' experience across all aspects of their learning. Please find enclosed a copy of our action plan for 2013-14 which summarises this feedback and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

You will see that one such development is the introduction of newly formulated assessment criteria and feedback forms. We have developed these in careful consultation with staff and students and following a short trial that involved blind re-marking of a sample of assignments that had already been processed through our exam boards. We hope that the new approach will be more accessible for students and provide them with a clearer sense of what is being sought from them and how they are being graded. Please find details of the scheme enclosed along with the explanatory notes that have been published to students and staff. Naturally, we shall be reflecting carefully on how this works out in practice and would welcome any feedback that you can offer as an External Examiner. If you have observations during the course of the year ahead of your annual report do please raise them with <> or contact our Director of Student Education, <>, via [<>](#) or <>.

Thank you, once again, for your work on our behalf as External Examiner. It is invaluable to have such constructive feedback and we look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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Director for Lifelong Learning,
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