

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012**

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	School of Design
<i>Subject(s):</i>	
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	Design for Textiles 3 (DESN 3566) Patterns and Culture (DESN154501) Design for Textiles (DESN156101) Design Theory 2 (DSN264001) Ind Study Dissertation (DESN366001) Colour Art and Science (DESN26331) Design or Sports and Performance Clothing (DESN25251) Colour and the Design Process. (DESN163301)
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	BA ( Honours)

**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 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*

No

**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

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**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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**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.*

For the Module DESN 3566: Design for Textiles, which is the only module I have been given access to the ILOs are to the appropriate standard for the 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/Objectives of the Module DESN 3566: Design for Textiles meets the expectations of the National Subject benchmark in Art and Design and FHEQ They are comparable with similar programmes at other institutions with similar programmes.

But I feel that the design element and specialism of Textiles offered by the programme is weakened through the unique programme of study offered to final year students at the University of Leeds. A choice of optional subjects, and/or elective subjects that are available, in many different subjects, from across the University provide students with more choice in selecting the subject areas within the degree they wish to study and is a unique option to be offered but to my knowledge is not available on comparable courses at Level 6 and I feel that the specialist knowledge needed within the field of Textile for future employment in the Industry may not be provided by the programme

**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 assessment methods and required outcomes are very appropriate for a Level 6 practice based module within a textile design subject and are clearly mapped against final year levels of attainment that are clear although a little long winded in the descriptors which may benefit from being bullet pointed to the different areas being assessed.

**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 on the course demonstrated a wide spread of performance levels across the cohort. These are comparable with the performance of students on comparable courses but the BA Textile Design Course at the University is unique as it employs written examinations as a major form of assessment along side practical design work.

**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.*

Direct entry students that demonstrated poor drawing skills upon entry were given additional drawing workshops. These had a positive effect upon their confidence and ability to design and develop their own style of work. Some of the graduating students demonstrated a vast improvement in their work between my two visits.

**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.*

I have not been made aware of any current design research undertaken by the teaching staff that informs curriculum design.

**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

**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.*

The information received from the University as to my role, powers and responsibilities were clear and received soon after the appointment was made.

**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.*

It is slightly unclear as to what Programme or part of a programme and Modules I am responsible for. I assumed it was the BA (Honours) Textile Design final year Design Module Design for Textile 3 and the Dissertation but received a variety of examination papers to comment upon that did not seem to link to the programme I thought I was responsible to external moderate.

I have only received the Code of Practice on Assessment for the School of Design and the Module Handbook for DESN 3566: Design for Textiles (This had to be requested for at the time of my visit.) but have not received any programme specification or information on the modules that students may select and there weighting.

**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?**

Yes I was provided with draft examination papers and I did make comment at the time on these scripts but had no feedback or completed exam papers to look at a later date. In July I was made aware by \_\_\_\_\_ that there had been a high failure rate with the Design Technology 3 exam but was not informed of any amendments to the taught curriculum to help rectify this situation.

I did not receive any copies of set design projects for the Design for Textile 3 Module or assessment procedure for the Dissertation Module.

**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?**

I managed to see the final shows of the Design for Textiles 3 – specialisms Module but only exhibited work, other supporting work was not available due to the area being cleared for the Final Design Degree Show opening scheduled for the evening of my visit. I was given the opportunity to meet with a selection of students across the grade range from different specialisms Constructed and Digital print and at this time had the opportunity to see supporting design work.

I feel the selected sample group was rather too small in relation to the number of students studying the Module but time restraints of only having an afternoon to meet with the student cohort may have restricted the number.

I received e-copies of a range of dissertations with a mark but the scripts showed no marking or annotation.

All work looked had been assessed at the right assessment level. I am confident that the standard of work is in keeping with national assessment standards comparable with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

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

Yes. I was sent a wide choice of dissertations to comment upon and they were of a good standard but I feel they tended to follow the same or similar format with the inclusion of too many surveys/questionnaires' that were not always applicable to the research subject. But I understand this is being addressed with a New Research Methodology Module in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Dissertation.

**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?**

The administrative arrangements were generally satisfactory for the whole process but there was some confusion as to the time I needed to arrive at the University/Department and when I would look at the work and meet with the final year students. I would have liked to see copies of any formative feedback that had been given to students. This was not provided in either the dissertation module or the design module I was involved with.

I was able to attend the Board of Examiners meeting, which was run in a professional manner and I was very satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

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

Yes.

## Other comments

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

Work of the design students in the Final Module 3566 reflected a high standard of commerciality and very viable textile designs. During my meetings with individual students that had achieved a range of grades those, which had demonstrated poor drawing skills in my initial meeting in February commented upon the value that additional drawing workshops had upon their confidence to design and develop their own style of work. Some students demonstrated an improvement from the work they had carried out in the first semester.

The degree course the University of Leeds offers design for Digital print and Constructed Textiles. I feel that only offering digital print limits the level of expertise within the field of Printed Textiles that design students encounter on the course. The majority of other undergraduate courses in the UK offer the opportunity to experience other print processes such as devoré, discharge, flock and foil printing, transfer printing and other hand screen printing processes in tandem and combined with digital printing technology. This produces a wide variety of designs that currently meet the demands of both the interior and fashion print industries.

I also found it very sad that constructed woven textiles is no longer offered or taught at the University of Leeds. It is an area of constructed textiles that still offers good employment prospects both in the UK and abroad. Other competitive Universities still offer and build upon this option with the result of great student successes' in National Competitions and employment placements. I had the opportunity to meet the two exiting students that had specialised in the weave discipline and although their teaching had been limited they had achieved a high standard of work.

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Dear <>

Thank you so much for your insightful, supportive and useful report. I should like to thank you for the thoughts that you have provided our course with in this your first year as external examiner for the Textile Design programme. I will outline below my responses to each of the standard points in the examiner's report:

1. You indicate in your report that you were not provided with the Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for all of the modules you were required to review. The online catalogue of the modules:  
<http://webprod3.leeds.ac.uk/catalogue/modulesearch.asp?L=UG&Y=201314&F=M&E=D&SN&N=all&S=&A=any>  
is provided for your reference. For each module, the Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes are expressed within the various module descriptors. For ease of accessing this information in future visits, I will ensure that you are provided with a hard copy to refer back to in order to expedite this aspect of the examination process.
2. The unique structure of the Textile Design programme at Leeds (as with all undergraduate programmes within the University) provides students with a different set of learning outcomes from those at the vast majority of textile design programmes across the UK. These Intended Learning Outcomes, which follow the more classic "Art School" model in other textile design programmes, tend to concentrate on textile-specific skills-based learning. Here at the University of Leeds, there is a greater focus on the skills of lifelong learning required for the dynamic context of the workplace, both with the textile design specialism and broader fields of employment for graduates from a Russell Group university. That said, we have decided to develop a new discovery theme (elective) module that will offer students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in the area of textile design skills.
3. The descriptors of assessment will be modified and bullet point form used to express these in a less long-winded manner
4. The composite of assessment of practical work alongside formalised examinations will continue to be used and applied in the textile design degree at the University of Leeds. As you indicate, this method of assessment provides a comparable spread of performance levels across the cohort and acts a contributor to the unique character of this programme within the UK.
5. N/A
6. Drawing will continue to be regarded as a central skills development area for this programme of study.

7. All of the members of the programme teaching team are research active. Some of this research is practice based, while for others it is more theoretically focussed. In all modules, teaching staff implicitly include reference to their research activity. Some specific lectures and seminars are also included in the textile-specific modules where the research of the staff is used to exemplify practice-based approaches/methodologies/theory or a composite of these. During your next visit, we can arrange for each of the members of the teaching team to briefly outline their current research and how this influences learning and teaching within the Textile Design programme.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. As mentioned in point 2 above, there is a unique manner in which the degree programmes are structured here at the University of Leeds. This means that students have the opportunity to highly customise their individual degree programme of study. The details of these can be broadly described as follows:-
  - Modular system, each module has a given number of credits (usually 10 or 20):
  - 120 credits each year for 3 or 4 years
  - 60 credits of core School modules per year
  - 1st year all students complete common year with the textile design course (except for electives which they can select from across the whole University: 20 credits).
  - 2nd and 3rd year students specialise in either:
    - Digital Textiles
      - Interiors / fashion
    - Structured Textiles
      - Interiors / fashion

#### EXAMPLE 1st Year

<b>Module</b>	<b>Credits</b>
• DESN 1560 – Design for Textiles 1B	20
• DESN 1561 – Design for Textiles 1C	20
• DESN 1800 – History and Theory of Art and Design	20
• DESN 1545 – Patterns and Culture	20
• DESN 1250 – Fundamentals of Imaging	20
<b><i>Plus 20 credits of Discovery modules</i></b>	<b><i>total: <u>120</u></i></b>

#### EXAMPLE 2nd Year

<b>Module</b>	<b>Credits</b>
• DESN 2564 – Design for Textiles 2A	20
• DESN 2565 – Design for Textiles: Specialisms	20
• DESN 2275 – Research Methods	20
• DESN 2640 – Design Theory 2	20
• DESN 2350 – Marketing Creativity and Innovation	20
<b><i>Plus 20 credits of Discovery modules</i></b>	<b><i>total: <u>120</u></i></b>

### EXAMPLE 3rd Year

Module	Credits
• DESN 3342 – Visual Research and Analysis	20
• DESN 3343 – Critical Studio Journal	10
• DESN 3566 – Design for Textiles: Specialisms	30
• DESN 3660 – Independent Study Dissertation	40
<b>Plus 20 credits option modules</b>	<b>total: <u>120</u></b>

I will take some time during your next scheduled visit to run through any questions that you might have about this structure and why the composite of modules were selected for you to review.

11. The exam papers turnaround from draft to external examiner comment to final sign-off by the School of Design examinations officer to printing is tight. In future visits to the School you will be provided with examples of the final exam paper along with a selection of student answers at a variety of mark levels.

There seems to have been some miscommunication regarding the Design Technology 3 (DESN 3630) module. You mention that there was a high failure rate and this is incorrect. There were no fails for this module last academic year.

12. The selection of students that you met with last year had been chosen across degree classification levels; some from structured and digital, and any students who may have issue with their final grade. In this coming year a larger sample of final year students will be made available for you to meet with across the same categories as last year. All students will be expected to have available for you to review all work pertaining to their final semesters studio work. It is reassuring that all work you looked at had been assessed at a level in keeping with national standards, comparable with similar programmes and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualification.
13. The current cohort of dissertations will not have benefited from the new Research Methods module. Unfortunately, this means their over-dependence on surveys and questionnaires is unlikely to be significantly addressed until 2015, at which point we expect a broader scope of research methods to be used to gather primary data.
14. Formative feedback forms will be made available for the textile design studio module and for dissertations during your next visit.
15. N/A

The Textile Design programme will be reintroducing woven textile design in a small scale manner over the next year. The response level of this reintroduction of weave will be monitored closely to act in response to student pick up, staff research and industry graduate opportunities.

There will be some extension to design for printed textiles that falls outside of the scope of the digital, including analogue rotary and screen printing, the use of pigment printing, devore and plisse. These techniques will be, in the first, instance presented to students in



theory and some design practice, followed later with workshops when facilities and technical support become available.

I trust that the above responses to your comments help clarify and move towards addressing the issues that you have raised in your report and will assist in making your next and subsequent visits easier and better prepared for by our department.

I very much look forward to your visit on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014. If there is anything that I have omitted or that I can arrange for you prior to your visit, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

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<b>Item:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Responsibility:</b>
(1)	Provide hardcopy of module aims and ILOs.	Programme Leader
(3)	Produce concise bullet-point descriptors of assessment.	Programme Leader
(7)	Introduce areas of research to external examiner.	Programme Team
(10)	Explain rationale for modules under review.	Programme Leader
(11)	Provided examples of exam paper plus selection of student answers at variety of levels.	Programme Leader
(12)	Make available larger sample of final year students to meet.	Programme Leader
(13)	Monitor future impact of Research Methods on dissertation.	Programme Team
(14)	Evidence formative-feedback for TD studio and dissertations.	Programme Leader