

**The University of Leeds****EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2010– 2011 (should read 11-12)

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION***Subject area and awards being examined:*

<b>School of:</b> Music	<b>Subject(s):</b>
<b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> BA (Hons) Music BA (Hons) Popular and World Musics BMus Music Performance BA Music with Year in Industry Graduate Diploma	<b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b>

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.*

No areas require urgent attention

***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.*

N/A

## 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 programme aims and ILOs were commensurate with the level of the award. Standards were entirely appropriate for the awards under consideration and programmes are consistent with other high quality undergraduate music programmes within the UK and abroad.

### 2. Did the aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

The aims and ILOs clearly meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark. The standard of coursework is in line with other HEIs and a variety of teaching and assessment methods are employed to suit the needs of different programmes.

### 3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs?

The majority of assessment methods are appropriate for undergraduate study and serve to support ILOs. The academic poster component for Music in Context modules should be reviewed over the coming year, as grades appeared to be consistently high across different cohorts. Although the grades did not have a significant impact on the overall assessment averages for the module, the course team would be advised to look at the place of the poster component in order to ascertain whether the assessment is inappropriate for the level or whether the assessment criteria needs to be amended in order to ensure a wider range of marks. If the component remains, a closer degree of moderation will be required to ensure consistency across the module and its subcomponents.

### 4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and ILOs?

Yes. The programme offers a broad variety of subjects and assessment methods, ranging from performances to composition portfolios. Final level work in particular is tailored to student interests that results in a significant amount of high quality 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. The nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

Undergraduate programmes have continued to develop, reflecting staff research interests. The year in industry has been delivered successfully and represents a major selling point for the programme. The new programme structure was in place for level 4 students and the integrated approach should enable the BA programme to be delivered more effectively and efficiently. However, current strengths in the programme – most notably the quality of popular and world music studies, the variety of musicological and compositional approaches, performance activities, music psychology and music technology – should be retained in future promotional materials to demonstrate that music at Leeds continues to be wide-ranging and inclusive.

### 7. The influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

Staff research interests are clearly embedded within the undergraduate curriculum. Indeed, staff research interests are embedded in all undergraduate modules ranging from musical analysis to studies of the 1960s, electro-acoustic composition to music psychology. Final year work continued to show the influence of staff research interests as students clearly benefited from a thorough grounding in research methods and produced work that was clearly influenced by research excellence within the School.

## 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?

Materials were sufficient for me to act effectively as an External Examiner and the programme team remained in communication throughout the academic year.

### 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?

Yes. However, I did not receive a revised programme specification for the new degree programme as requested last year. Although this did not impact on my work this year, I will require a copy of this prior to my next visit.

**10. Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

I was given access to coursework from all levels of the programme and also had the opportunity to attend some final year performance examinations. I did not have complete access to Turnitin modules until my visit due to a technical error, therefore, more work should be done to make this material accessible in advance of my visit next year.

**11. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners?**

Administrative arrangements were more than satisfactory. I remained in contact with the examinations team throughout the year and liaised with several members of the team over my visits as well as specific student cases. Despite the Music Exams officer being taken ill prior to the Board of Examiners, the meeting was conducted in a fair and efficient manner.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances. Each case was noted at the Board and the exams team ensured that individual cases were dealt with in confidence.

**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.*

N/A

**Other Comments**

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

Music at Leeds continues to produce some outstanding results and students clearly benefit from high quality teaching that is informed by research.

With the size of student cohorts and range of modules on offer, the programme team would be advised to consider revising their arrangements for co-ordination and moderation in some modules within the programme. For example, in addition to the moderation relevance of the poster component discussed above, the team might wish to reconsider the way in which dissertation students are allocated supervisors. In some instances, it was clear that student dissertation topics did not match supervisor interests. Whilst this did not have a detrimental impact on student attainment, this could present problems in years to come.

Finally, the music department website does not display current interests or reflect the breadth of activities undertaken within the School. I understand that a new website is imminent and so it will be interesting to see how this develops over the coming year.

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Dear <>,

Thank you for your external examiner's report for the academic year 2011–12.

Once more we are grateful to you for offering many positive comments about our programmes, including standards, student achievement, enhancements to programmes, and the feeding of research into teaching. I'm pleased, also, that you felt there was sufficient material on which to base your judgments.

We discussed your recommendation at School Management Committee, and action is planned as detailed below:

- A revised copy of programme specification will be sent to you prior to your next visit. We also intend to run training sessions for this part of the module's assessment.
- The academic poster component for Music in Context will be reviewed and assessment criteria revised.
- We regret that a technical error prevented you from having complete access to Turnitin modules. We will do all we can to try to avoid a recurrence of such errors.
- We are devising a new system for the allocation of dissertation students to supervisors, and we are keen to find the best match of interests possible.

- You noticed various inadequacies regarding the School's web pages. These pages have now been comprehensively revised, and are ready to display the KIS data.

It is enormously satisfying for the signatories below and our colleagues to read that you consider Music at Leeds to be producing outstanding results, with students clearly benefiting from high quality teaching. Thank you very much for all the hard work you did during the time you spent with us.

Yours sincerely,

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