

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined***Faculty / School of:***PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES***Programme(s) / Module(s):***PROGRAMME: THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE
MODULES:**

PECI 2501 Processes of Performance 3,
 PECI 2502 Theatre Practices 2,
 PECI 2503 Processes of Performance 4,
 PECI 2506 Performer Training,
 PECI 2507 Modernism and Postmodernism,
 PECI 2508 Staging Histories,
 PECI 3501 Processes of Performance 5
 PECI 2103 Practice-led Research

Awards (e.g. BA/BS.....c/MSc etc): **BA****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?

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

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.*

All aims and Intended Learning Outcomes were entirely appropriate for the modules, as well as for the structure and content of the programme.
The standards across both levels were entirely appropriate for the level of 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.*

Both the Aims and ILOs compare very favourably with similar programmes at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework. They would fit in the higher end of comparable programmes at 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.*

The range of assessment methods on offer are all very appropriate for the ILOs of each of the components on the modules. The arrangements for marking are robust, and a great deal of care is given in arrangements for deciding classification. I note as an example of good practice, that there will be a meeting with regards to marking for all staff at the start of the academic year. This is particularly important with regards to consistency of marking across core modules with different groups and members of staff involved, as well as the convenor ensuring consistency across the marking on such modules.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods is reflected in the spread of good marks across the modules. There is also evidence of a great deal of support both for the less strong students to help them improve, and also at the top end to push them further.

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 academic standards reflect the strong academic and practice-based content of the programme. Bearing in mind the range of abilities of students, they relate well to comparable courses.

The practical work is generally of a very high standard across both levels, and is a strength of the programme, as is in particular the links with the industry. The standard of written work has improved considerably over the past three years, though some of the less strong students still struggle with this.

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.

One particular feature to note is the change in assessment weighting in the POP modules to 60 – 40. This has resulted in a much higher standard of writing, showing a complexity and critical reflection of the practice. This element has improved considerably over the past three years.

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 influence of individual staff research and interests is evident across all practical and seminar modules. The work within the applied strand demonstrates the strength of staff knowledge and research in this field. Similarly modules such as 'Performer Training', based on the research of a member of staff, has produced some very strong work.

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

I have acted as a mentor for the new External Examiner in Managing Performance. I was contacted by the University to ask if I would be willing to do this, and what it would entail. I then contacted the new External to ask if he'd like any support in advance of the Board.

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.*

The material was sufficient, and I had the opportunity to ask for additional information as required.

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.*

These were all received either via email, or through the VLE system. When I required further information, this was supplied promptly.

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?

N/A.

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?

Yes. I want to offer particular praise to all concerned for the module packs with sample work available to me, and for the compiling of DVDs of practical work, which were all clearly labelled and sorted, which made it much easier to look through the work.

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?

The administrative arrangements were all very satisfactory, including the running of the Board, which I attended. I was completely satisfied by the rigour and care that was taken by all members of staff in the discussion and agreement of recommendations which were all satisfactory.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place, and followed carefully.

Other comments

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

I would like to draw note to the level of feedback and support given to students by staff, which is exemplary.

As with last year, I note the high standard of practical work in POP4 and POP5, particularly in the applied strands. This, along with the links to creative industries, is a real strength of the programme and department, and perhaps should be emphasised further in marketing etc.

Generally, the standard of writing has improved across the programme, particularly in relation to POP4 and POP5 as mentioned previously.

The range of marks is generally fine, but staff might be encouraged to use the more higher end marks if appropriate.

I would particularly like to thank all the academic and technical staff for compiling the module packs for the Examination Board,

including the DVD material. I suggested at the board that the department might want to consider putting the films of all practical work onto a server, which will then be available for staff and students, as well as for the External Examiners, which might help with accessibility of material. This is a practice in the Department of Drama at <>, and has proved to be very beneficial.

SCHOOL OF PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

DRAFT RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

ACADEMIC SESSION 2011-12

PROGRAMME TITLE	BA (HONS) THEATRE & PERFORMANCE
NAME OF EXAMINER	<>

The School would like to thank <> for <> helpful and supportive comments in the External Examiner's Report. The report is constructive in tone and very welcome as an overview of our teaching practice.

Observations about specific comments are offered below:

- 1. Both the aims and ILOs compare very favourably with similar programmes at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework. They would fit in the higher end of comparable programmes at other institutions.*

We are delighted that <> feels this is the case. The team has worked hard to ensure that the aims and outcomes of our modules are clearly articulated, and that they offer students a definite intellectual framework in which to explore practice methods and reflect upon them in the appropriate terms. It is good to note <> confidence that the Processes of Performance 3-5, along with the various options and electives, are robust and stimulating.
- 2. The academic standards reflect the strong academic and practice-based content of the programme.*

This is a very pleasing observation, as it indicates a high level of investment, understanding and creativity from our students. <> expands on <> comment by mentioning a steady rise in the quality of written work, but <> also comments that *'some of the less strong students still struggle with this.'* The high attainment reflects favorably on the on-going and individualized modes of verbal/formative feedback, as well summative feedback – noted and described by <> as *'exemplary'* – offered throughout each of the modules. We are confident that this level of student-staff interaction and feedback will work to support those students who find some of the written assessments to be more challenging.
- 3. The practical work is generally of a very high standard across both levels, and is a strength of the programme, as is in particular the links with industry.*

We feel that a definite and coherent approach, not only within Theatre and Performance, but also in the School-wide modules, has impacted beneficially on the practice components of the Processes of Performance modules. An emphasis on the cultural industries context, featured as core content in PECI 3109 Contemporary Issues in the Cultural Industries and also as themed content in PECI2101 Strategies for Research, encourages students not only to engage

with current ideas and trends in the sector, but also to consider and experiment with cutting-edge practice.

4. *As with last year, I noted a high standard of practical work in Pop4 and Pop5, particularly in the applied strands.*

We welcome this comment, endorsing as it does our collaborative ethos as well as our externality. The students respond positively to the challenges that this kind of work presents (external locations, particular client groups, etc.). They understand the value of working with various institutions in terms of their own employability.

5. *The influence of individual staff and research interests is evident across all practical and seminar modules.*

We are delighted that the link between research and learning and teaching is so evidently beneficial, be it in the core curricula of the Processes of Performance modules – *'the work in the applied strand demonstrates the strength of staff knowledge and research in this field'* – or research-based options like PECl 2506 Performer Training, which <> notes, *'has produced some very strong work.'*

There is a definite and growing sense that the students appreciate staff research applications within their learning experience, and the nature of student response can be gauged by the strength of the work that these modules produce.

Recommendations for action:

I am happy to report that there no major recommendations for action. We have, however, taken on board <>s advice to utilise a fuller range of marks at the top end.

We look forward very much to working with <> again next year.

Signed: <>

Date: 29/10/12