

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):	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)	
Performance Culture and Context: Choreography	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.

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?

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.

The Choreography programme was for the first two years of my tenure an independent MA programme, which shared certain core modules with the Performance, Culture and Contexts MA. For the final year it was entirely subsumed under the Performance, Culture and Contexts MA. Throughout my tenure as external examiner the teaching processes and projects have been entirely appropriate to the various cohorts, and accommodated the range of students within each year. Many of the students were mature students with established careers in their field of study, others were younger and less experienced. The team accommodated the requirements of the individual students well, and noted the various comments that I have made over the years and incorporated them into their learning and teaching strategies. The final year continued in the manner of the earlier years, in spite of the change in status of the (now) Choreography module. The progress of some students has been notable, and in some cases although starting the degree with relatively low grades achieved distinction level in the final assessment. The assessment was always rigorous, as is shown by the range of marks achieved by the various students in the various years that I have overseen as external examiner. The procedures of the school have been equally rigorous with respect to the examination process, and always ready to answer queries.

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 learning outcomes of the choreography programme were entirely appropriate for this level.
The standards expected of the students were equally appropriate.

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 is compatible with similar degrees at this level, and met national benchmarks and the FHEQ

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 design and structure of the assessment methods were rigorous and arrangements for marking and classification of awards were sound.

The range of levels in the students was substantial, ranging from fails to passes with distinction. The balance tended to be similar across years, dependent, of course, upon the academic level of the individual students accepted for the degree.

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.*

See above ...re 4.1

4.2 The strengths of the students tended to be the maturity of many of them. Any weaknesses lay in younger students not quite realising when they embarked on the Masters degree that the level they were expected to achieve was *considerably* above that of an undergraduate degree.

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.

The attention given to individual students was exemplary.

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.

The choreography team's research into educational processes and in current advances taking place in their subject has clearly influenced the manner in which the degree has been taught,

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.*

The material provided, and the use of the online system was sufficient for me to act as external examiner.

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.*

I received appropriate documentation in good time.

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.

n/a/

Other Comments

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

I would like to place on record that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as external examiner, and the dialogue with both staff and students, and wish the choreography team all success in future years as part of the Performance, Culture and Contexts MA.

SCHOOL OF PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

ACADEMIC SESSION 2010-11

PROGRAMME TITLE	MA Choreography
NAME OF EXAMINER	<<>>

Thank you for your final External Examiner Report for the MA Choreography, academic session 2010/11.

The programme team would like to express their thanks for the positive critical support and expertise you have shared during your term as examiner. The wealth of your experience, keen attention to detail and concern for the quality of the student experience has helped to secure the success of the programme and the students. It is good to see that efforts made by the team to support the varied experience levels within the cohorts have been considered exemplary.

You have identified the ongoing integration of educational processes and current advances in the field into the delivery of the programme. The practice of theory has been a key focus for the programme. Our research-led approach has proved interesting though taxing for a number of the less experienced students.

Your interest and experience in interdisciplinary performance and knowledge generation has helped the team to consider ways that good practice from the MA Choreography might be developed within the MA Performance Culture, Context. We continue to review ways in which we facilitate closer relationships between documentation for practice-based learning and assessment and we thank you for your contribution to this debate.

You have observed that the programme has seen fluctuations of strengths and weaknesses in each cohort, this final year being no exception. During the life of the programme, a number of international students have benefited from cultural and embodied exchange of ideas in their choreographic practice. We look forward to continuing and expanding this work within the new structure of the School's postgraduate programmes.

Signed: <<>>

Date: 16th January 2012