

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Faculty of Arts, School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	MA Religion and Public Life, and MA in Religious Studies and Development Studies Modules: THEO5050 Religions & Global Development, THEO5265 Race and Religion and MA Dissertations
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	MA

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

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?

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.*

The modules covered the ILOs of the MA programmes. Students are offered a rich variety of thematic topics under the heading development studies and religion. The ILOs of the modules also reflect a standard that is appropriate for the MA 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 benchmark expectations are met. The aims and ILO are in line with the new national benchmark statement for Master level that undergoes consultation at the moment. The Department offers students a good mixture of comparative topics and themes that reflect the points made in the TRS Benchmark statement as well as the generic Master level statement

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 general assessment method is essays which is the norm in other MA programmes in the UK.

I noticed however that students are allowed to create their own essay title. While this flexibility allows students to develop their research interest, it also puts a lot of pressure on staff.

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.*

In comparison to last year I saw an increase in theoretical awareness. The essays demonstrated deep interest in the topic of the module and – in comparison to last year – a better critical engagement with the academic literature.

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.

Students have show a stronger engagement with the academic literature.

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 research was in particular visible in the dissertation module but also in the essays for the taught modules.

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

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.

Yes, I received all necessary material.

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.

Yes, I received all necessary module handbooks and information about the assessment.

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 not sent the assessments topics.

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 received all essays for the two modules taught as well as a sample of 4 dissertations. All scripts were attached to the feedback sheets of first and second marker and their agreed mark.

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

Yes, the dissertation topics were all appropriate for Religious Studies and the dissertations were assessed according to the academic standard.

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 could not attend the PG Examination Board but was sufficiently informed before and after. On the whole I was satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes, mitigating circumstances were considered appropriately.

Other comments

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

**School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of
Science**

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

11 November 2013

Dear

Thank you very much for acting as MA examiner for TRS in 2012-13. We greatly appreciate all your work and the thorough and supportive report that you have provided, as well as your role as consultant after the PG Examination Board meeting.

We are glad that you are satisfied with the coverage and standard of our MA programmes, and particularly appreciate that you observe an increased theoretical awareness of our students as reflected in essays and dissertations.

We take notice of your concern that the flexibility offered to students to propose their own essay titles may put more pressure on staff. However, as we are committed to allow our students to develop their research interests, and because we currently have a limited number of students in the MA programmes, we consider this additional workload to be acceptable.

With regard to your comment that you had not been sent the assessment topics, I assume that this is a mere observation that relates to the above mentioned flexibility in essay titles.

Thank you again for all your work, and very best wishes,