

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014

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

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	Islamic Studies
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Introduction to Arabic Language, Essential Skills in Arabic, Introduction to Islam, Culture and Islam etc.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Islamic Studies certificate

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**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 Quality Assurance**
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?

All the relevant External Examiners' reports were provided before I came for the Exam Board and so were the responses 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

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 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.*

In my opinion all the Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate for the modules I examined and also for the structure and content of the programme. The programme is taught to a good and appropriate standard for the award of a certificate.

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's aims and ILOs meet the expectation of other national institutions and against the national subject (RS) benchmark. It is a well-designed and structured programme with teaching done at an appropriate standard.

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 quality of the marking is very good across the range of modules. They are fair and equitable and are appropriate to the ILOs. The feedback by the tutors was very good and of good standard. The assessments are very well structured and have a good variety. The assessments demonstrate that students are learning a very wide range of topics with good knowledge and critical ability. The progressive teaching of the modules across the year is demonstrated within the work of the students between the two semesters.

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 assessments of the students in the variety of seven modules examined demonstrate good academic standards at the certificate level. The assessments show that students have overall good access to academic resources and ability to analyse and be critical within academia.

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.

The course is very well structured and it is possible to see the development of student work from the first year to the second year in their individual assessments.

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 variety of modules in the programme demonstrates a good balance and is informed by contemporary research such as Islam in contemporary society and Arabic language teaching.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

N/A

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

9. **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

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. **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.

As the External Examiners I had sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and I was encouraged to request additional information if needed.

11. **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.

All appropriate documents were received.

12. **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 provided with draft examination papers/assessments and the questions were all appropriate

13. **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?**

Sufficient assessed work was made available to me and the scripts were clearly marked for me to give an evaluation of them.

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

N/A at Certificate level

15. **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 was able to attend the exam board and I was very satisfied with operation of it. I feel that this board has worked very well in the two years that I have been an External Examiner.

16. **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

<>

xth November 2014

Dear <>

External Examiner's Report for 2013-14

I am writing to thank you formally for your work over the last year as our External Examiner for Arabic and Islamic Studies provision and for the report that you produced in the summer. It is of great value for us to have the benefit of your observations as a scholar who brings such knowledge and experience in the field. I know that <>, in particular, is warmly appreciative of the opportunities to reflect with you on issues and developments within <> programme.

Over the last few months, we have been considering feedback that we have received from our students, teaching staff and external examiners and formulating plans for the 2014-15 academic session. In the light of this, I would like both to respond to your own report and to give you a broader sense of our thinking across the range of the LLC's provision.

Your report describe outcomes and standards as appropriate and commends the programme as "well-designed and structured" with evidence of "the development of student work from the first year to the second year in their individual assessments". You also note that "the variety of modules in the programme demonstrates a good balance and is informed by contemporary research." In relation to assessment, you commend the quality of marking and feedback as well as highlighting not only the breadth of topics covered in assignments but also the way in which they demonstrate that "students have access to academic resources and ability to analyse and be critical within academia".

We are very encouraged by the positive findings of your report and, although you have not identified specific areas for development, recognise the importance of continued work to sustain, and wherever possible improve, the quality of our Arabic and Islamic Studies provision.

Moving on from your own field, please find enclosed a summary of feedback from all of our external examiners. You will see that your positive evaluation of our learning and teaching, feedback and support for students is shared across the range of examiners. Points for development are generally programme-specific though, wherever appropriate, we are careful to ensure that recommendations are considered across our provision as a whole.

Feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Experience Survey continues to show a very positive picture, with strong satisfaction scores across all areas of the survey. It is particularly encouraging to find that students' satisfaction on assessment and feedback remains high (and significantly above national averages) in a year where we have introduced new assessment criteria and feedback arrangements. Please find enclosed a copy of our action plan for 2014-15 which summarises the data from surveys and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

During 2013-14, we also had our Student Academic Experience Review. This is a process which takes place every five years for all departments in the University. It involves formal review by a panel of colleagues from across the institution supported by an external reviewer, in this case the Director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at <> University. The panel considers documentation, including our own self-assessment, interviews staff and students and then formulates a report to the University's Taught Student Education Board. Please find this report attached, for your information. We have been very encouraged by its positive findings, including commendations for good practice, and have been working on following-up proposals for further development (as you will see from the action plan which I am also enclosing).

Thank you, once again, for your work on our behalf as External Examiner. We look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

With all good wishes,

<>
Interim Director
<>