

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

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Lifelong learning Centre
<i>Subject(s):</i>	1. Interdisciplinary (Liberal Arts / Social Science); 2. Arts and Humanities
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	1. BA in Contemporary and Professional Studies 2. Foundation Year in Arts and Humanities
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	1. BA 2. Foundation degree

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?

I was provided with a summary of other external examiners' comments.

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.*

I felt that both ILOs and standards were appropriate to their respective programmes and awards.

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.*

Yes.

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.*

I felt that these were appropriate – there was a broad range of assessments which provide opportunities for students' diverse/individual capabilities, interests and creativity. The mark sheets were linked to the ILOs, and clearly explaining how the student is being assessed. I felt these were helpful learning tools.

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.*

Yes. As pointed up above, a variety of assessment methods were provided which compares well with other similar degrees. The feedback from tutors was very helpful in all respects from content to writing to academic conventions – an example for any university tutor.

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.

These were both new degrees (1st year).

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.

I felt that students were encouraged to engage in research – this was clear not only from the research module but from students own texts in the assessments that I read.

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.

Yes, it was.

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.

Yes, both programmes' handbooks and marking criteria 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?

Yes.

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?

Yes.

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

BA was Year 1 so N/A.

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?

Yes.

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

Yes, this seemed well done to me.

Other comments

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

My one comment goes to the fact that assessment cover sheets, feedback sheets and module mark sheets have the module number/name but not the course name. I am sure this is obvious to all internal staff and students although it was not clear to me, I had to check which course the modules that I reviewed belonged to (though this may be that I am used to a different approach, which is course rather than module based)

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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 the BA Contemporary and Professional Studies and Arts and Humanities Foundation Year. 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 <> and <> are warmly appreciative of the opportunities to reflect with you on issues and developments within these new programmes.

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.

It is encouraging to read the positive comments within your report, especially since you are a new External Examiner who brings a fresh eye to our provision and because both programmes are, themselves, in their first year of delivery. You note that outcomes, standards and assessment processes are all appropriate and observe that you saw evidence of students being encouraged to engage in research "not only from the research module but from students own texts in the assessments". You also commend the broad range of assessments as providing "opportunities for students' diverse/individual capabilities, interests and creativity" and praise the feedback sheets as "helpful learning tools".

We shall certainly look to build on these strengths as both programmes continue to develop and will also reflect, in review of our new feedback sheets, on your observation that programme as well as module identifiers might be helpful.

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,

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Interim Director
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