

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:	Social Sciences- Sociology
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Gender Studies
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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

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

Over the four years of my externalling I have been consistently impressed with standards of teaching, innovative and relevant work provided by students and consistency of marking and detailed feedback provided by markers. Work has always matched up to other work I have seen at other universities at MA level in terms of standards and grades given. School Procedures have been, in the main, good. Staff have provided up to date and enthusiastic teaching which has been reflected in quality of work produced. This has been achieved despite integration of the centre into sociology with its attendant disruptions. In my last year, this integration of the Centre seems to have progressed well.

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 intended learning outcomes and programme aims were commensurate with the 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.*

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.*

The design and structure of the assessment methods were appropriate. Also, marking arrangements were very satisfactory and quality of teaching/assessment methods was excellent overall. The full range of marks were used.

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.*

Academic standards and student performance were comparable to those at my own and other institutions. There were no weaknesses in the cohort which was generally strong.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

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.

No enhancements were evident, but as in previous years, feedback was generally excellent and expertise/knowledge of staff involved was very evident. Though see my comment below on second marking re consistency.

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.

As commented on for the last three years, academic staff are research active and at the front of their respective fields. This was apparent through set topics and curriculum design and students clearly benefitted from this.

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

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

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.

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.

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?

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?

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

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?

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

Other comments

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

I was again very impressed with the quality of work produced, care taken with marking, and commitment of staff and excellent research led teaching. My comment last year that staff needed to be consistent in their referencing advice to students had started to be heeded, but there was still some variation in the length/quality of comments made to students by 2nd markers on some modules. All first marking comments were detailed and constructive. The integration of the centre into sociology appeared to be going well. I would encourage staff to ensure that weaker students have sufficient, and the right kind of support, to be able to engage fully in a (rightly) demanding and rigorous course. Overall, the course exemplifies the best of PG taught courses in the field of gender.

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16th January 2015

Dear <>

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your External Examiner's report for the 2013/14 academic year and to thank you for your valuable contribution to the work of the School over the past four years. Your enthusiasm and commitment to the School and our students has been greatly appreciated.

The School is encouraged by your positive comments, particularly in relation to the high standard of the students' work and the improvements to the quality of our feedback to students. We would just like to note, by way of information, that second marker comments are not returned to students. We are pleased that you have noted that we have responded appropriately to your comments and suggestions for improvements to our programmes and that you feel that the Centre is now more fully integrated into the School. We have all worked hard to make this succeed.

Once again may I thank you for your work on behalf of the School. Your contribution has been greatly appreciated by the whole School. I would also like to offer you my sincere best wishes for the future.

Yours Sincerely,

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School of Sociology and Social Policy,

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