

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:	Faculty of Arts, School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
Subject(s):	<i>Religious studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA Theology and Religious Studies Modules: Sociology of Religion I, Pentecostalism (level 2), Race and Religion in Southern Africa (level 2), Religions and Global Development (level 3), Religion, Gender and Society (level 2), Muslims in Britain (level 3), Dissertation (20 and 40 credits)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

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

Nothing to report

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

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 was satisfied that the programme covered the ILOs of the BA programme Theology and Religious Studies. The modules on the whole reflect a standard that is appropriate for the BA award and also enable students to achieve the adequate learning outcomes.

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 TRS national benchmark expectations were met. The school has included a new module due to staff change which has been very successful. The school offers students a rich variety of topics, both thematic and with focus on selected religions. Students gain an important insight in the wider field of contemporary religions.

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 assessment methods are quite diverse (examination/essay, extended essay, group presentation/report and so on). They introduce students to a range of methods that will further their skills. On the whole I was satisfied with the variety of the assessments and the standard the students demonstrated.

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.*

I was satisfied with academic standards demonstrated by the students. In comparison to last year I noticed an increase awareness of theoretical understanding which was very good. There is still a common weakness in referencing and written academic English but on the whole students demonstrated impressive research skills and the good use of a wide range of readings.

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 School introduced a new module due to the arrival of a new member of staff. It enhances the range of topics offered to students and enriches the contemporary focus of the BA programme.

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.

Most modules are firmly linked to the research area of the module leader which is always inspiring for students. The way how students respond (e.g. by referring to publications of the lecturer) shows that students appreciate that their lecturers are research active.

The influence of research by students was again visible in the dissertation module. Though I did not see such an impressive dissertation as last year the interest of the students and their ability to undertake research was evident.

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

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, I received all material.

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, I received all papers.

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 sent the draft papers and some of the essay assignment but not all. Nonetheless, on the whole I can confirm that the level of the questions was adequate for each level.

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?

I was able to sample most papers myself as I got access to the marked essays via Blackboard. In semester 1 I received work in 2 modules on paper which were sufficiently sampled. In semester 2 I was shown all scripts of the exam paper (all other work was marked and sampled online) as well as a sample of dissertations.

I was able to see comments and feedback of all material and was sent the moderation sheet. On the whole I was very satisfied with the procedure. While in the first semester lecturers included their comments in a disparate way, it was harmonised in the second semester which made it much easier for me.

14. 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.

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, the administrative arrangements were all satisfactory. The main administrator was always helpful and very efficient. I attended the Board of Examiners and was satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Special circumstances were considered appropriately during marking and at the Board mitigating circumstances were taken into consideration according to the university policy.

Other comments

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

The move from paper to Blackboard was done very efficiently during this academic year and I welcome that I have access to all work on Blackboard. I also recommend the School for the way it monitors new members of staff and teaching assistants and guide them through the exam period. I felt very confident in the robust way the School looks after the assessments.

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT

<>



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

1 September 2014

To <>

Dear <>

Thank you very much for acting as external examiner of our BA Theology and Religious Studies in the academic year 2013-14. This letter is to acknowledge receiving your examiner's report (dated 4 July).

We are glad that you are satisfied with the overall standard of our modules in relation to the Intended Learning Outcomes as well as the TRS national benchmark criteria. We also appreciate your satisfaction with the variety and standard of assessment methods and the academic standard demonstrated by our students.

We have noted that you did not receive all draft essay assignments and will ensure that next year the draft assessments of all the relevant modules will be sent to you in advance.

Many thanks for your positive evaluation of our examination procedures and administrative arrangements, as well as of our curriculum and the work of our students and staff. Your report encourages us to continue and build our current School practice.

Let me make use of this opportunity to inform you that in the academic year 2014-15 <> will re-assume <> role as exams officer for Theology and Religious Studies.

Last but not least, let me congratulate you with your recent promotion to <> in the Study of Religions by the <>, which is very well deserved.

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

<>