

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

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

Faculty / School of:	Design
Subject(s):	Art and Design
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA Hons Art and Design

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

There are no matters that fall into the category of urgent attention.

On my examination visit, a number of points came up from students and staff. I note them in this section for consideration.

Examination meeting with students: 17th June 2013

I met with the third year students, first as a group, to reflect on the last three years and then with five individuals in front of their exhibition work.

Positive reflections on the course:

- **Working links to other University departments:** English, Textiles and Music were cited by the students as having been positive and supportive in the development of their work.
- Cross-department working is developing as a distinctive feature of the Art and Design course and should be further developed and encouraged.
- **Leeds Visual Art Forum** was highlighted as an important outside link.
- **Flexibility of the course.** To offer a year in industry or Erasmus exchange. Three students enthusiastically recounted their work experience in museum, publishing

and design industrial placements and one student of <> Erasmus exchange in Dresden. All four students had developed a mature and self confident attitude during their time out which was reflected in the high grades achieved for their work during their graduating fourth year.

- **Electives.** Positive support for the cross-course electives.
- **Tutor support** was praised for providing a rich cross section of ideas.
- **3D Technical support** was warmly praised by all the students.
- **Parity of Dissertation tutors.** This had been of concern last year, the students reported complete satisfaction with the dissertation tutorial support this year.

Negative reflections on the course:

- **Visiting Lecturers.** A request for a wider range of subjects reflecting the students' interests.
- **More information about open lectures** within other courses, in particular, Fine Art.
- **Technical support for Printmaking.** This issue has come up every year and should now be resolved. I understand from the Course Manager the issue is being considered. Printmaking has an important potential across all the Design school courses. The investment in a cross-course printmaking technician providing support to course specific projects and elective work would be invaluable.
- **Studio closing hours** after the official finish of teaching. For the academic departments, early closing makes sense but, not for Art and Design. The pre-assessment degree show ritual of students cleaning, painting walls and hanging work takes time and is very much part of the course experience. Two bank holidays in May subtracts two whole days so every hour counts. I fully support this request to reconsider the studio hours post official teaching for the Design School.
- **Armley Mill, a lasting memory.** The Armley Mill first year project was raised for a third time. Since the first year, this project has stuck in the minds of this first cohort to carry out the project. Having visited the Mill last year I have no doubt in my mind that this is an excellent starting project.
- **Feedback:** I met with five individual students who presented their thoughts and ideas in front of their exhibition. The five students represented a range of work and the potential development possibilities of the course. I was particularly impressed with a digital visual clock design project. The excellent presentation made by this student sets a very high standard of studentship, personal and professional development for the Art and Design course.

Observations/recommendations to consider in discussion with the course team:

- **Tracking students.** What happened next? Now the course has established itself, it would be good to track the progress of the alumni. Especially important in promotion in answering the parent question, "what do your students go onto do"? Trying to gain information after University can be notoriously difficult. It certainly should not be rushed. Art and Design graduates can take time to settle and the long view of 4/5 years after graduation is the one to achieve. A Facebook Leeds Art and Design site might be a possible starting point.
- **Examiners meeting.** This year for the first time the External Examiners met informally at a buffet supper before the private view. This was an excellent idea which I would consider to extend. I would further suggest that Examiners are paired off to present to each other a sample of high, middle and low grades from their examined degree show. Over an Examiners tenure, this would build up knowledge of the Design school and a sense of the parity of the marking/grades between departments.
- **Dissertations.** The depth of analysis and development of the research varied in the dissertation script sample. This point was acknowledged by the course team and the lead dissertation tutor has a new module in place for level two next year to further develop analysis and critical thinking.

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?

N/A

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

My tenure as External Examiner has been over a period of course merger and change. In my first year we were seeing out the last third year of the old course and introduction of the first two years of the new Art and Design programme. The conflicting course philosophies between old and new made for a difficult period in which the course manager undertook an intensive work load introducing the new course curriculum and the inevitable juggling of students and staff changes.

In the second and third years, after staff changes, the course team worked hard to understand and develop the identity of the Art and Design offer at Leeds. The outcome of this development was clearly evidenced in this year's final show. The wide range of Fine Art and Design projects that were exhibited clearly demonstrated the vision and distinctive quality and potential of the Art and Design course brief.

I end my Examiners tenure with the course in a very positive and collaborative mood and with a team spirit that is infectious. I have no doubt the course team and their students will continue to drive this course forward.

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 standards are appropriate for this 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.*

As noted in previous reports, the written work at Leeds is of a higher standard and the studio work is comparable to the Art school sector of Higher Education.

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.*

There are no marking issues with the studio work or with the dissertation. A clear methodology of first, second and if require third blind marking is in practice. All the original individual marks sheets and notes were made available.

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.*

Dissertation: A cross-section of high, middle and low mark scripts were sent in advance of my visit. The standard of the written work was high. Eight dissertations were sampled; all the students gathered a wide rich reference of research as seen in their literature reviews. The depth of analysis and development of the research varied and this was reflected in the marking grades.

The quality of the marking was high. In the sample of eight scripts, seven out of the eight grades were within one / two percent between first and second marker with the eighth grade being a four percent difference. I consider this as quality blind marking and my congratulations to the tutorial staff involved.

Studio work

The degree exhibition was a very well presented exhibition of a consistent standard. The show demonstrated the diversity of the course and meets the brief of the course title, 'Art and Design'.

The final agreed grades reflect the quality and range of achievement of the course (five first, thirty 2.1 and four 2.2). I have no hesitation in fully supporting the assessment decisions made by the course team.

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.

External Examiner's meeting (see above 'Observations/recommendations to consider in discussion with the course team'). Cross-course assessment / grade parity is an issue of wider dissemination across the University courses. A recommendation for External Examiners to pair up and review grade parity between their examined courses. All projects and modules are in a constant reassessment of content and effectiveness. Changes and refinements made often reflecting the staffs' research (note 7).

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.

Research is the very essence of good art and design teaching. In discussion with the course manager I requested a short report to highlight the range of research and teaching connections within the Art and Design course. I include the Course Managers text in my report.

All the main studio modules are informed by research interests with staff delivering seminars to their strengths - all dissertations are allocated where possible to coincide with research interests.

<> research is an excellent example of a practice that sits on the cusp of Art and Design practices and so makes <> an ideal example for our students - <> visual music/kinetic wallpaper produced in collaboration with the composer <> is an example of this -2011 Collision, Art First, London -2010 Collision, Leeds City Art Gallery -2009 Collision, Gallery Oldham, Lancashire.

Many of the staff have worked collaboratively - with each other <> with both <> and <> and externally with musicians, poets and other artists - this influence of this can be seen in the degree show - with students looking across the University for collaborative partners.

The Armley Mills project was further enhanced by <> and <> holding Millspace residencies there and having an exhibition there as a result. <> research in response archives and museums plays into this module and into her level 2 and 3 teaching - evidenced by this exhibition 2011 The Role Of Collections And Archives In Art Practice Seminar organised by <> Re-Collect: Sculptural Responses to ideas of Place within Collections, collaboration with Huddersfield Art Gallery and the Arts Council Collection, Huddersfield Art Gallery <> module Time and the Image in Contemporary Art was written as a direct result of <> research interests - a recent exhibition includes Dialogue in Place: Volume II at Form and Content Gallery Minneapolis (2012) <> module Contemporary Art and Memory is also as a result of <> research - <> work with Mapping Spectral Traces is exemplary - recent shows include

*2013 Landscape during times of uncertainty Southampton City Art Gallery
Estuaries and Excavations Abbey Walk Gallery, Lincolnshire
Drawn 2013 Royal West of England Academy, Bristol
Jewish Artists in Yorkshire Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, Leeds
Art and Geography, Musée des Moulages, Lyon, France*

*2012 shadows traces undercurrents Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Regis Centre for Art Minneapolis USA
Close to home: artists reconsider the local, A collaboration between Land2, East Street Arts and the School of Design, University of Leeds.*

Curious: a site-specific art trail, West Norwood Cemetery, London

<> module *Understanding Contemporary Art* and the large *Art History module Desn 1800* are also founded on <> long standing interest in the relation of theory and practice -

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

N/A

The Examination/Assessment Process

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.*

The printed information provided by Leeds University was clear and concise and all my questions were answered and evidenced by the course team.

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.*

Comprehensive documentation was emailed via a drop box in advance. All other records/handbooks were made available to me during my examination visit.

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?

Sample examination questions were sent and approved earlier in the year.

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?

YES. A selection of dissertations and a very well presented third year cohort exhibition of work supported by back-up notes and visual research provided adequate, useful evidence for the evaluation of the standard of work achieved.

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

In the sample seen, there was an appropriate range of subjects for Art and Design students. I might suggest for next year there is a print-out of all the dissertation titles in order to see the full range of subjects covered.

I commend the very high level of consistent marking between first and second markers.

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?

Yes. The examination board meeting was efficiently managed and supported by a clear digital presentation of the results and final grade calculations. The discussion was open and constructive.

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

YES. All supporting issues were appropriately presented and recorded.

Other comments

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

I would like to thank the course manager and course team for their hospitality and support in making my four-year External Examination tenure at Leeds a very enjoyable experience. I wish the Art and Design course every success in the future.

<>

August 2013

Response to <> (BA Art and Design)

Dear <>,

Thank you once again, and for the final time, so much for your insightful, supportive and useful report. I should also like to thank you for the care, attention and thoughts that you have provided our course with in your four-year term. You really have been exactly the “critical friend” that an external examiner should be, the knowledge that your lifelong commitment to art education has brought has been invaluable to me, as programme manager. This year both staff and students especially appreciated that your visit to us in June was your first foray back into the world after a difficult illness, a testament to your dedication. Throughout the four years we have always found one of the most valuable aspects of the visit were the discussions that you were able to elicit from our students. Sometimes in these situations the students open up and talk in a way that they have not done with the staff, I was again relieved that no really unexpected issues were raised this year, I will address the negative points that you brought up from these discussions in the list below. We are delighted that the students appreciate the flexibility of the course, the variety of electives, the opportunities offered by the years abroad and in “industry” and with other departments in the School and wider University. We will continue to develop our link with Armley Mills and with other arts organisations in the city.

Throughout your time as examiner the entire team has appreciated working with you so I am especially pleased that you found our team spirit infectious – my colleagues are always been supportive both to each other and to the students and also able to keep me in check! I think we have a solid team: its members are committed to their research and professional practice but most importantly to the students and their work. I should like to include <> our very student friendly and tireless 3D technician in this. Everyone puts in the extra hours in their various ways and in their different styles to ensure that the students reach their potential.

Much of what you brought up in last year’s report has been addressed, however, there has been a time-lag in terms of the equipment inventory, I have requested that the School Manager puts this into place this year and he has asked programme managers to provide information, I sincerely hope that this is put into action.

Each year of your term the traditional print area has been brought up as an area of concern, by you, the students and in the NSS comments, this is especially in terms of School-wide knowledgeable and expert technical support. Whilst there has been some progress e.g. a post graduate demonstrator, the 3D technician taking over the ordering of materials, and some non- specialist supervision the team is aware that this has not yet been adequately dealt with. I have been in discussion with our new head of School and while it is unlikely that this will be resolved this year there is perhaps some hope for future years.

I will respond to other points in your report that require a response in the order in which they appear.

- **Visiting Lecturers.** Some students have requested some more purely “design” speakers – the Graphics course organised several and I shall let the students know this programme too. In terms of the Fine Art lectures – this is politically more awkward but I will offer our visiting lecture programme to them and see if they reciprocate.
- **Studio closing hours after the official finish of teaching.** I understand that this refers to the run up to the degree show. It is ironic that the studios close early just when all the students are working for their degree show and final studio modules.. I agree that this seems very peculiar and will bring this issue up with the other programme managers and then approach the Head of School and School Manager with this suggestion..

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- **Tracking students. What happened next?** I will discuss how best to proceed with this with the team and with other programme managers in the School.
- **Examiners meeting.** I will propose that there is a cross course parity visit for the external examiners, in my experience of external examining this has also been the norm.
- **Research skills and the dissertation** It will be interesting to see how the new research skills module impacts student perception of the dissertation module.

Once again I should like to thank you for all your support in my first four years as programme manager.

Yours sincerely