

## 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:	Modern Languages
Subject(s):	<i>French</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Single and joint programmes involving French
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

##### 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](mailto: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?*

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*

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.*

The structure and content of the modules that I scrutinised were entirely appropriate. Outcomes were clearly stated, and the supporting documentation clearly explained how the proposed learning activities would help to achieve them. The standards were likewise entirely appropriate.
  
- 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 aims and outcomes were very similar to those at comparator institutions, and similarly pitched relative to CEFR.
  
- 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 modules that I scrutinised were assessed primarily by a combination of written assessed coursework and written examination. These assessments were entirely appropriate in terms of length and difficulty relative to the given Level. The assessment modalities adopted still permitted diversity within the overall programme (length and language of exercise, range of analytical and argumentative skills being tested, etc.)
  
- 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 overall level of achievement in the content courses was impressive. The best performances in modules corresponding to those that I teach or have previously taught were high, and I was struck by the manner in which students rose to the challenges imposed upon them. On occasion, these exceptional performances could have received even higher marks (higher into the 80s). At the lower end of the range of achievement, I was also impressed by the quality of the work that I sampled: while weaknesses were certainly apparent, the performances in this category in terms of knowledge of prescribed texts and methods of critical analysis compared favourably with those that I experienced in my previous institution (a direct comparator). In comparison with last year, I was a little less impressed by the linguistic performance in the invigilated examination component of Year 2 core language. While the best candidates produced good performances, the grammatical exercises – in themselves entirely appropriate in terms of difficulty – exposed significant weaknesses in a not insignificant number of candidates (especially an exercise involving conjugation of the past historic).
  
- 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 modules over which I had purview remained largely unchanged, and continued to impress in terms of their conception and execution.
  
- 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 last year, I was extremely impressed by the sheer range of modules offered by French. At a time when some departments are rationalising courses, it was very heartening to see full representation of colleagues' research specialisms in the curriculum (e.g. discreet medieval and early modern modules, a range of linguistic modules, etc.) In this regard, French at Leeds offers an excellent example of integrating research expertise explicitly into the undergraduate programme.
  
- 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.*

Scripts, marking grids, and course documentation were provided for the modules scrutinised, and this information was entirely sufficient for my role. The provision of statistical data for the marks awarded for each module was particularly useful for the purposes of moderation.

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 (see above).

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 received and commented on assessments for the modules within my purview, and my recommendations were incorporated to my satisfaction. The level of difficulty was entirely 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?

The addition of another external examiner in response to our recommendations last year greatly improved the efficiency of operations, and afforded me a much better opportunity to scrutinise the modules.

Last year, work submitted via Turnitin and marked with Grademark for the modules that I reviewed was printed out, and I was so impressed by the result that I was inspired to use the same principle for my own marking of formative exercises when I relocated to <>. This year, the modules using Grademark for ACW did not seem to provide print-outs, and so I would have needed electronic access in order to view the feedback – which, unfortunately, could not be arranged during my stay. Handwritten annotation on scripts was sufficient, with some variation between markers; the same applied to the provision of materials documenting the internal moderation of scripts. In both regards, the practice of <> and <> was exemplary, and could be used as a model for all to follow.

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

Yes.

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 attended the French Board, and was entirely happy with its conduct. In contrast to the practice at my previous institution, student names were visible, which allowed meaningful comments about particular cases to be made (and also facilitated the recognition of noteworthy candidates). I commend this lack of anonymity wholeheartedly.

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

Particular praise is due to the French exams officer and support staff for their efforts in making my task as efficient and enjoyable as possible.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Many thanks for your External Examiner's report and for all your excellent and constructive comments. We are delighted that you commend our teaching and assessment procedures so highly. We set great store by the range and quality of research-led modules we offer, and it is encouraging to see precisely these aspects being validated externally. We are delighted that you praise the high standards that our students have reached in their assessed work.

Thank you for raising the point about grammatical weaknesses on the Level 2 written language exam. I will raise this with the module convenor and reflect on ways we can improve the teaching of grammar and in particular, the past historic, in preparation for the exam next year.

I am glad that the addition of a fourth external examiner, following your recommendation last year, has allowed you to scrutinise the modules in greater depth this year. I will investigate further why no print-outs were available this year for assessed essays marked using Grademark with a view to seeing whether we can reinstate printed copies next year.

Thank you also for commending our use of student names in the exam board and our efficiency in dealing with mitigating circumstances. I will pass on your thanks to our exams representative, \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ our programme administrator.

Finally, I should like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us and we very much look forward to continuing to work with you over the next few years.

**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:	School of Modern Languages & Cultures
Subject(s):	French
Programme(s) / Module(s):	All undergraduate degrees involving French
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA (Hons)

**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](mailto: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*

N/A

**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?*

No.

**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.*

The French Department at Leeds University offers an impressively wide range of modules and options that provide full coverage of the subject area. It was also evident that students could follow clear pathways over the three years of undergraduate study. Aims and Learning Outcomes were thus clearly being met and standards of achievement were wholly appropriate.

**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 scrutinised a range of modules at first, second, and final years. The modules employed a wide variety of assessment methods that clearly tested the whole range of students' competences. There were numerous examples of very high quality work and even the weaker scripts showed clear evidence of very good teaching.

**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 wide range of different assessment methods employed gave all students ample opportunity to demonstrate their achievements. The standards achieved were clearly comparable to those achieved in similar HE institutions.

**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.*

As this is my first year as an External Examiner at Leeds University, I have no clear basis on which to make any such assessment.

**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 would be expected, the first-year modules I scrutinised tended to be of an introductory or survey type. However, from the second year on, and particularly in final year, it was evident that the form and content of modules closely reflected the research expertise of the lecturing staff. The forms of assessment used, such as long essays of up to 6k words, also demanded the students themselves undertook significant amounts of independent research.

**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**

I was allotted a mentor from amongst the existing team of External Examiners. The support I received was very helpful.

## 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.*

I was provided with ample material to perform my role and was actively encouraged at all stages to seek further clarification or advice as necessary.

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.

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 asked to approve the exam/assessment questions for all the modules I was tasked with scrutinising. My comments on these were thus actively solicited. The nature and level of these were entirely 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?**

I was provided with the full range of exam scripts/assessments for all of the modules I scrutinised. All of the marked scripts were accompanied by clear comments from both first-markers and moderators. The cover sheets appended to French language work seemed particularly helpful and clear. I have full confidence in the accuracy and fairness of the evaluation of the standards achieved by each student.

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

The range of topics covered by students in their final-year dissertations was impressive, as was the standard of work produced by many of them. The method of assessment – completion of a 6k-word dissertation – was clearly appropriate, allowing the students to engage in depth with a topic of their choosing. All dissertations had been carefully and fairly marked.

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?**

All administrative processes ran very smoothly. I attended the internal board of the French Dept. and was entirely satisfied with its conduct, although the standard of the instant coffee did leave something to be desired.

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

These issues had clearly been considered prior to the Board. This seems entirely appropriate as a means both to safeguard student confidentiality and to ensure parity of treatment across the School.

## Other comments

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

At the close of the Internal Board, each External Examiner was given the opportunity to make any comments or suggestions regarding any aspect of the teaching, learning, and assessment procedures in the French Department. My only real comment at that stage was that the Department might wish to reduce the amount of the final-year dissertation students can submit in advance in draft form for supervisor's comments (currently a maximum of 4k-words of a 6k-word dissertation). Colleagues engaged extremely positively with this suggestion; they were clearly aware of the potential problems current arrangements might pose and were already considering possible alternatives for future years.





**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:	Modern Languages and Cultures
Subject(s):	<i>French</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	French Studies, with responsibility for the following modules: Level 1 – FREN1010, FREN1020 Level 2 – FREN2120/2125, FREN2160/2165, FREN2340/2345 Level 3 – FREN3010, FREN3585, FREN3740, FREN3751, FREN3770, FREN3835, FREN3840
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

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**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?*

Yes, I received the final report from my predecessor.

**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 – first year as an External Examiner

## 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 aims and outcomes for the programme are clear and well articulated, and the programme is very well designed in order to facilitate them. The programme offers clear progression and pathways, from introductory and survey modules at Levels 1 and 2, to more specialist and research-led modules at Level 3. At the same time, modules at earlier stages of the programme reflect the research interests and strengths of the teaching team. There is no doubt that standards are appropriate for the award of a BA in French Studies.

**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. The design and aims of the programme compare very favourably with programmes in French Studies at comparator institutions with which I am familiar ( ).

**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 programme uses an appropriate range of assessment methods at all levels of the programme. Like many similar programmes, emphasis is increasingly placed on assessed pieces of coursework, which is an effective way of allowing students to engage in depth with a topic and develop skills of independent learning and research. There are a number of examples of innovative and stimulating forms of assessment, such as an assessed life-writing exercise in FREN3740 (Women's Writing) and essays based on a photograph selected by the student in FREN3585 (Camera Lucida). Marking of assessed work was consistently rigorous and judicious, and feedback is generally of an excellent standard. There is clear evidence from written work that students are engaging very well with a diverse range of often challenging and complex material.

**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. The strongest students are producing work which is comparable with the best students at other institutions with which I am familiar. A number of essays were thoughtful, well structured and showed excellent understanding of key themes in French culture. Less strong students displayed weaknesses common to many students (difficulties with structuring essays and developing arguments), but they were generally very well supported by feedback which was focused, clear and helpful. I saw evidence that several students had improved their marks from one piece of assessment to the text, suggesting that they are benefitting from the feedback provided.

**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.*

N/A – first year as External Examiner in Leeds.

**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.*

There is clear evidence that the research interests and expertise of the teaching staff inform all levels of the curriculum. This is most obvious at Level 3, where there is an exciting and diverse range of specialist modules available to students; but modules at lower levels also reflect the research strengths of the Department, which helps create clear and coherent pathways through the programme. Consistent use is made of modes of assessments which encourage students to develop skills of independent research and thinking in relation to the subject. A notable example of this is the practical life-writing exercise in FREN3740 (Women's Writing).

**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**

I was offered mentor support as a new External Examiner for AY 2013/14. Even though I have not needed to draw extensively on it, the mentoring system is an excellent example of good practice.

**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. The School and University made available a range of documentation which was very helpful for getting to know the programme and regulations in Leeds.

**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. All relevant documentation was provided relating to modules for which I had responsibility.

**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 assessment material in good order and good time. Questions were always well judged, and there was good communication over any (usually minor) comments and suggestions I had.

**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. I had access to all the assessed work for the modules I was scrutinising. Marking was rigorous and judicious, with feedback to students consistently helpful and detailed, reflecting a well-embedded culture of feedback across the Department. It was also pleasing to see good use made of the full range of marks,

particularly at the top end of the scale.

Overall, there was very clear evidence of moderation being carried out carefully, and of dialogue between first and second markers. The sole exception to this was the French-English Translation component of FREN3010 (Advanced Language), the scripts for which had been divided equally between two markers. Although the batches produced quite divergent mark profiles (one containing a higher number of firsts, thirds and fails than the other), I saw no evidence that moderation or discussion between the two markers had subsequently taken place. Instead, the external examiner was invited to adjust the mark distributions if deemed necessary. Following review of the scripts, discussion with the Departmental Examinations Officer, and comparison with statistical data from other components of the Advanced Language module, I was satisfied that the overall results for the F-E Translation component were in line with the other components, and felt that it was not necessary to adjust the mark distributions in this instance. However, I would strongly recommend that the Department review its assessment processes in relation to this component of FREN3010, and ensure that marking practice is consistent across the module as a whole, given that it involves a number of different components. In particular, I would recommend that markers establish an agreed marking scheme before marking takes place (as was the case for the English-French Translation component), and ensure a clear record is kept of second marking and moderation. Indeed, the Department might find it helpful to draft and implement a single moderation record form to be used across all its modules to help with consistency of practice in this area.

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

I was not responsible for reviewing French Dissertations this year.

**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 unable to attend the Board of Examiners this year, due to a clashing commitment at another institution. However, I spent a full day in the Department prior to the Board in order to review modules for which I was responsible. The day was very well organised and run by the Department's Examination Officer, and I was able to complete my work in good time. Administrative arrangements over the course of the year have been excellent.

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

N/A (see 15 above).

**Other comments**

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

I was asked to pay particular attention to FREN3840 (Sublime and Object in French Literature and Thought) this year as part of the Department's regular review of its modules. FREN3840 is a new module being offered for the first time in AY2013/14, and confirms the diversity and intellectual interest of the Department's modules at Level 3. The course invites students to engage with a challenging and stimulating range of material on an important theme in French culture. Assessment (two long essays) was appropriate for a course of this type, which requires extended reflection on complex texts. Work was good even from weaker students, indicating that the module engages and pushes students very effectively. Marking was carefully carried out and helpful moderation suggests that an appropriately experienced second marker had been assigned to the module. Overall, the module is a welcome and appropriate addition to the Department's offering at Level 3. Although this year's cohort was relatively small (four students), the module can be expected to attract greater numbers of students in subsequent years.

Dear

Many thanks for your first External Examiner's report and for all your excellent and constructive comments. We are delighted that you commend our teaching and assessment procedures so highly. We set great store by the range and quality of research-led modules we offer, and it is encouraging to see precisely these aspects being validated externally. We are delighted that you praise the high standards that our students achieve in their assessed work and we welcome your positive comments about the opportunities we provide students to undertake independent research in their final year.

Thank you for your comments in relation to specific final-year modules and your praise of innovative assessment practices on Women's Writing and Camera Lucida and of the diversity and intellectual interest of texts covered on the new module, Sublime and Abject. Your comments on the marking of FREN3010 French to English translation exam are very welcome and I have raised these issues with the module convenor for Level 3 language. We will ensure that next year there is an agreed marking scheme in place for each of the written language papers and that moderation procedures are thorough and consistent across all three written language exams.

Finally, I should like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us and we very much look forward to continuing to work with you over the next few years. Looking ahead to next year, [redacted] will continue as exams representative for French and my colleague [redacted] will take over the role of Head of French, as I am stepping down after three years in this role.

With best wishes,

## 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:	Arts; School of Languages and Cultures
Subject(s):	French
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Single and Joint Honours including French
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

**Completed report**

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**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*

No

**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*

N/A – the department has informally invited me to continue as external examiner into a fourth year (2014-15) and I have accepted.

## 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 Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes of the programmes examined are completely commensurate with the standards appropriate for the award of a BA including French

**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 reviewed both language modules (FREN3010 synthese exercise & FREN3730) and a range of social / political / cultural studies modules. In both cases, the assessment methods were entirely appropriate to the Intended Learning Outcomes. In terms of language, students were appropriately challenged as regards their grammatical accuracy and fluency of expression. In the 'content' modules, the coursework essays produced were on the whole highly analytical in nature and well versed in academic conventions. The best performances in the examinations for the content modules were outstanding in terms of their structure, detail and referencing.

**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 in previous years, particular strengths in relation to students on comparable courses relate to performance in examinations for content modules (see 3 above).

**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 majority of the modules that I reviewed continued in the high standards that I had seen in the previous years. The principal innovation in the modules that I reviewed was the transformation of the 'synthese' exercise within FREN3010 from an unseen examination into a take-away paper. I found that this new arrangement was very well organised and the department has already undertaken a very thorough review of this year's practices with recommendations for next year with which I concur. This change was made in response to student demand for an element of the final language assessments to be made into a piece of coursework rather than an unseen exam, bringing French in line with practices in other language departments. It was not entirely clear to me why this exercise was chosen since, apart from the time factor, there is little added value in terms of the type of work that students might undertake at home rather than in an examination hall for a summary. In contrast, translation exercises, for example, might benefit from students being able to undertake research if undertaken as a piece of coursework.

**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 content modules, particularly at final year, are closely related to the research specialisms of tutors.

**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**

I was assigned as mentor to <>. We had email contact over the course of the year as and when necessary.

#### 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

**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

**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?**

All the questions that I reviewed were very good and I had very few comments to make other than a few suggestions to wording.

**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?**

All work is made available to External examiners for review. The department gives each external examiner a list of core modules, new modules and a selection of other modules (on a rota basis) to review as a priority. This year, we were a team of four external examiners for French rather than three. This made a significant difference to the percentage of work that we could review and thus was a very welcome improvement. The scripts were all clearly marked and annotated. The standard of marking and moderating for the synthese exercise for FREN3010 was, without exaggeration, the best that I have ever seen.

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

Yes, the system whereby the module convenor acted as second marker for all the dissertations provided an excellent degree of consistency in the marking process.

**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 Board of Examiners for French in which module marks were reported and discussed which was run entirely satisfactorily. I did not attend the Classification Board. The Board is not run on an anonymous basis as is the case in some institutions. As last year, I commend this practice and encourage its continuation.

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

Yes – a separate Mitigating Circumstances committee had taken place prior to the Examination board and its recommendations reported at the Board.

**Other comments**

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

Dear

Many thanks for your External Examiner's report and for all your excellent and constructive comments. We are delighted that you commend the high standards our students reach in the final year and that you find our assessment procedures rigorous and fair. The advice and support you provided earlier this year in relation to FREN3070 Bilingual Liaison Interpreting was particularly invaluable and the module convenors are very appreciative of your recommendations.

Thank you for your comments regarding the introduction of a take-home assessment for the final-year synthèse and we are delighted with your positive response to this change. We chose the synthèse as a take-home exercise rather than a translation because we felt that this would reduce the risk of students using online resources whilst working at home and in particular, translation tools. This year, the students seemed to appreciate the opportunity to use dictionaries and have a longer time period in which to reformulate the passage. However, your comments about the usefulness of the synthèse in relation to translation as a take-home assessment are very helpful and we will consider these again in our review of final-year language during the first staff meeting in October.

We are delighted that you commend our assessment procedures so highly and your comments on the rigorous marking of the final-year synthèse paper and the final-year dissertations are greatly appreciated. I am also glad to hear that the increase from three to four external examiners in French this year has allowed you to carry out more extensive scrutiny of our modules.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the care you have taken in monitoring our procedures and for the invaluable way in which you have shared your knowledge and experience with us and we very much look forward to continuing to work with you next year. Looking ahead to next year, will continue as exams representative for French in Semester Two and my colleague will take over the role of Head of French, as I have stepped down after three years in this role.

With best wishes,