

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

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

Faculty / School of:	School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies
Subject(s):	Fine Art
Programme(s) / Module(s):	ARTF2001,2040, 3061, 3062, 3080
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

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 the previous examiners report, I did not receive their written response but I did discuss the key issues from the report during my interim visit.

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.*

The programme handbook provides a comprehensive list of ILOs and they are all appropriate to the awards under consideration.

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 methods and the structure of assessment on the programmes I was asked to examine are appropriate. However staff did indicate that the period of assessment had been shortened from two days to one and a half days and that consequently they felt slightly rushed to complete the marking of both the show and the documentation work. At my interim visit I discussed assessment methods with the final year students and it was evident that they received clear guidance on assessment criteria and process. Students also indicated that they found self-assessment an extremely useful part of the process, however some commented that they had omitted or not been reminded to do their self-assessment.

The work presented on the studio modules was of a good standard and there were several presentations of an outstanding quality. There was also a healthy diversity of work presented in terms of media and subject matter. Students did though indicate that they would like better access to workshops and training in the use of equipment. It was evident from the work that students produce that they are receiving a high level and quality of tutorial support and guidance.

I looked at several feedback forms for the PIC module and it was evident that students received in depth commentary and guidance on their written work.

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 work produced by students indicated that they understood the programme aims and the students the ILOs. Allowing students to curate their own degree show was a real positive in term of the overall look of the exhibition and it was evident that students had reflected carefully on the placement of their work. There were several presentations that appeared quite sparse, given the size of the studio module I did wonder if these presentations provided enough material for the student to be adequately assessed on. Documentation and artist statements should help to clarify understanding of students work, and especially where a student has submitted a 'minimal' presentation, however I did have a problem with the format of the documentation. In several cases documentation lacked editing and it was thus not easy to get a clear understand of how the students was thinking and how their work had developed and progressed over the module. I would recommend that students from the first year onwards be given workshops on statement writing and on producing coherent documentation.

I found the PIC's to be of a high standard and there was evidence that there was a positive reciprocity between the work produced on this and their studio modules.

The work produced by Leeds students is on the whole is comparable to the work of students at other institutions I am familiar with. As I noted the overall install of work was strong, however there were a few individual installations where it appeared that not enough testing out and consideration had been given to the choreographing of the parts. This may be due to a lack of project spaces where students can test out their ideas.

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.

This is my first year of examining the programme so I cannot comment on enhancements from the previous year, however I did note that students in year 2 found audio feedback useful. Students also commented on the knowledge and positive experience they gained from producing an exhibition outside of the department. They also highlighted the visiting speaker programme as a particular strength of the course. The opportunity to study abroad for a year is a fantastic and invaluable opportunity and its clear that students who choice this option benefitted greatly from the experience.

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.

It is evident from the work students produce both on their studio and PIC modules that students are directed toward and engaged with current and relevant research in the field of art. It was clear from their documentation that students were looking at relevant and contemporary art and its associated discourses, however it would be useful to read a few sentences by them as to how the work they cite influences their thinking.

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.

The external examiners handbook provided me with a clear guide as to my roles and responsibilities as an external examiner and it staff fully supported me in carrying out my duties as an new examiner on the programme.

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.

I received the handbook and the forms staff use to assess students well in advance of my first visit.

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?**

All assessed work was made available to me during my visit. I would though request that a sample of the PIC's be sent to me prior to my June visit.

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

The choice of subjects was relevant and the method of assessment was 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?**

I attended the Board of Examiners it was conducted with a high degree of professionalism and I was completely satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

**School Response:**

On behalf of the Fine Art team I would like to thank _____ on his first year as examiner, for supportive and insightful comments. Our response to _____ report is highlighted below:

External Examiner's Report:	School Response:
<p>3.The methods and the structure of assessment on the programmes I was asked to examine are appropriate. However staff did indicate that the period of assessment had been shortened from two days to one and a half days and that consequently they felt slightly rushed to complete the marking of both the show and the documentation work. At my interim visit I discussed assessment methods with the final year students and it was evident that they received clear guidance on assessment criteria and process. Students also indicated that they found self-assessment an extremely useful part of the process, however some commented that they had omitted or not been reminded to do their self-assessment.</p> <p>The work presented on the studio modules was of a good standard and there were several presentations of an outstanding quality. There was also a healthy diversity of work presented in terms of media and subject matter. Students did though indicate that they would like better access to workshops and training in the use of equipment. It was evident from the work that students produce that they are receiving a high level and quality of tutorial support and guidance.</p> <p>I looked at several feedback forms for the PIC module and it was evident that students received in depth commentary and guidance on their written work.</p>	<p>The assessment period was similar to previous years. However one member of the team found it difficult to fit in for the whole assessment period due to external examining elsewhere. We will however scrutinise the assessment schedule to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the assessment process to allow for all staff ample time to give full attention to the student number.</p> <p>We acknowledge the examiner's remarks on the quality and diversity of our students work and, as an ongoing, process we are continuing to examine how best to use technical support to facilitate students practical needs. Our move to new accommodation and the addition of a 0.5 technician will almost certainly help to resolve this issue.</p> <p>This is an obvious strength to the course and one we are keen to nurture and develop. [see below – 4]</p>
<p>4. The work produced by students indicated that they understood the programme aims and the students the ILOs. Allowing students to curate their own degree show was a real positive in term of the overall look of the exhibition and it was evident that students had reflected carefully on the placement of their work. There were several presentations that appeared quite sparse, given the size of the studio module I did wonder if these presentations provided enough material for the student to be adequately assessed on. Documentation and artist statements should help to clarify understanding of students work, and especially where a student has submitted a 'minimal' presentation, however I did have a problem with the format of the documentation. In several cases documentation lacked editing and it was thus not easy to get a clear understand of how the students was thinking and how their work had developed and progressed over the module. I would recommend that students from the first year onwards be given workshops on statement writing and on producing coherent documentation.</p> <p>I found the PIC's to be of a high standard and there was evidence that there was a positive reciprocity between the work produced on this and their studio modules.</p> <p>The work produced by Leeds students is on the whole is comparable to</p>	<p>We thank the examiner for his supportive comments in regard to our exhibiting philosophy and will carefully examine his concerns in relation to the exhibition / supporting material relationship and its need to provide comprehensive information to acknowledge the students' holistic practice.</p> <p>We will discuss this within the team and formalise for next year's examinations.</p> <p>We will discuss this concern as a team and analyse</p>

<p>the work of students at other institutions I am familiar with. As I noted the overall install of work was strong, however there were a few individual installations where it appeared that not enough testing out and consideration had been given to the choreographing of the parts. This may be due to a lack of project spaces where students can test out their ideas</p>	<p>where we could provide sufficient opportunity for students to test out ideas in presentation form. We do, however, get students to present work throughout their three years and actively encourage them to present work where ever and whenever they can.</p>
<p>6. This is my first year of examining the programme so I cannot comment on enhancements from the previous year, however I did note that students in year 2 found audio feedback useful. Students also commented on the knowledge and positive experience they gained from producing an exhibition outside of the department. They also highlighted the visiting speaker programme as a particular strength of the course. The opportunity to study abroad for a year is a fantastic and invaluable opportunity and its clear that students who choice this option benefitted greatly from the experience.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the examiner's remarks on the unique strengths of our programme and thank him for highlighting their significance in ensuring we remain competitive and current.</p>
<p>7. It is evident from the work students produce both on their studio and PiC modules that students are directed toward and engaged with current and relevant research in the field of art. It was clear from their documentation that students were looking at relevant and contemporary art and its associated discourses, however it would be useful to read a few sentences by them as to how the work they cite influences their thinking.</p>	<p>As highlighted above we will look carefully at how we can develop the strengths, as indicated in the PiC module, to embed art writing into studio practice.</p>
<p>On behalf of the Fine Art Team -</p>	<p><i>07 September 2015</i></p>

Yours sincerely,

Head of School