

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:	POLIS
Subject(s):	Politics
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Politics (Parliamentary): PIED5113M Developments in British Politics PIED5118M Parliamentary Studies PIED5779M Research Methods PIED5121M Parliamentary Placement PIED5777M MA Dissertation
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Quality Assurance**
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Matters for Urgent Attention

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box

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.

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 ILOs and the academic standards applied are commensurate for the award of MA Politics. The programme I examined is solid and the standards are 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 ILOs are in line with sector norms and met the expectations of the national subject benchmark.

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 for the modules on the degree programme I examined are appropriate. The marking is consistent across the board and the feedback is thorough. I thought the quality of the MA Dissertations was especially pleasing and this had a bearing on the large percentage of students who gained merits and distinctions overall.

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. Given that 18% of MA students achieved distinction and 55% achieved merit at the MA level in 2014-15 clearly suggests that MA teaching is of a very good standard; the cohort was hardworking and bright; and that the students are given the opportunity to achieve at the postgraduate level.

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 (This is my first year as External).

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.

Some of the modules on the programme are at the cutting edge of contemporary political science research; others I examined are essential core modules that are to be found on an MA in Politics across the sector.

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

No further comments to add from those I made on my UG examiners' report.

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?

Yes, I read and authorised drafts examinations and assessments for the modules I was given. The nature and level of the questions was appropriate. When I found the occasional typographical errors I flagged this and amendments were made.

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 am confident in my assessment of the academic standards. The work was clearly annotated.

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

Yes. I enjoyed the dissertations and the parliamentary placement work. The subjects were appropriate. The method and standard 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 MA Exam board. The meeting was efficient. The Exams Officer was again in complete command of processes and procedures. The Board's recommendations were sound.

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

Yes. I think staff at POLIS are thorough and shown concern for their students. Mitigating circumstances and medical evidence were given appropriate consideration.

Other comments

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

<> and <> administrative team in POLIS have been immensely helpful and efficient in making the process of external examining an easier one.

School of Politics and International Studies

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT

T (Student Education Office)

E POLIS@leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

18 December 2015

Dear .

MA External Examiner's Report 2014 – 2015

On behalf of the School, may I thank you for your Examiner's Report which was shared with colleagues in the School.

Your report was highly positive. I had myself seen some of the dissertations and Parliamentary logbooks submitted by the students and, like you, thought they were of a high standard. As you pointed out, our MA students this year achieved a high number of merits and distinctions, a tribute to the quality of the students concerned and to the teaching. Thank you for your positive comments about the administrative team and the efficiency of our procedures. You can be assured that we will be working hard to maintain these high standards.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the time and effort that you have invested as our external examiner in ensuring that the programmes and modules offered by POLIS are commensurate with the standards offered in comparable institutions.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

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