

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:

Life Long Learning

Subject(s):

Creative Writing

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Advanced Creative Writing Workshop LLCC 3953
 Creative Writing Workshop LLLC 1040
 Creative Writing Workshop LLLC 1048
 Global Conversations LLLC1359
 Scriptwriting LLC 2248
 Storytelling in Video Games LLLC 3965
 Travel and Journalistic Writing LLLC 2262
 Writing Science Fiction & Horror LLLC 2239

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

Modules on undergraduate programmes

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?

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 modules are very well structured and the Intended Learning Outcomes are highly appropriate.
- Standards are high and marking is rigorous

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 range of tasks required here and the standards expected and achieved are entirely in line with what is expected at other institutions and complies with national benchmarks.

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 assessments are very pleasing – they enable student to show what they can do. It is clear that marking is fair, clear and rigorous. The tasks are so designed that the students cannot simply rush a task at the last minute. They must engage in a whole process in order to complete the task.
- It is clear from the module handbooks and the work that the students produce that teaching and learning are both of a high standard.

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.*

- It is apt that those who responded more as writers than as students of literature received the higher marks. Even those with lower scores presented some good arguments and used English quite well though did not always make that many points.
- There is some strong material in all of the presentations. The ones that gain higher marks, quite rightly, have more structure and more extended arguments.
- There was good evidence here of critical reading informing writing. There were some very good ideas. The higher scoring students had a better grasp of the craft, more controlled writing and good presentation with correct referencing and formatting. Their work is approaching a publishable standard.
- There was some impressive work with the top-scoring scripts approaching a publishable standard. Notably those who produced more creatively firm submissions also had better formatting and presentation.

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.

- I'm pleased to note that staff are beginning to make effective use of the annotated bibliography. This is a useful reflective tool. This may be developed further.
- Some very affective assessments are based on students summarising a blog they have kept. Again, this becomes a very effective reflective tool.

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 clear that staff are acting as reflective creative practitioners and are keeping themselves abreast of changes in practice and in the creative industries and passing these on effectively to their students. It is particularly clear in Storytelling in Video Games LLLC 3965

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.

Plenty of material was provided and I felt confident acting as an external examiner.

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.

Plenty of information was offered about the modules. It may be helpful to be able to see what students see on their VLE.

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 questions were suitable in nature and level.

13. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

The right number of scripts were provided. Some were annotated more than others. This was partly a function of how the scripts were provided – i.e. were Turnitin comments shown. Some were, some weren't. It was also a function of different marking styles. All of the marking and the different styles appeared to me valid though I think it may confuse students at little.

Might it be possible for me to access the electronically marked scripts directly?

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

Or creative projects? Absolutely, 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?

The Board was very well administered. All involved were very helpful.

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

Staff on these modules give very detailed feedback. Do the students read it and act upon it?

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18th December 2015

Dear <>

External Examiner's Report for 2014-15

Over the last few months we have been reviewing reports from our External Examiners along with feedback from students, including the results of the National Student Survey of finalists and the University's Programme Survey which covers those in other years of study. I am now writing to each Examiner both to respond to reports individually and to give an overview of the outcomes of this annual review.

Thank you for your characteristically thorough and thoughtful report on our Creative Writing provision. We are pleased that you continue to find that modules are "very well structured", learning outcomes "appropriate", standards "high" and marking "rigorous". Your observations on our assessment processes are particularly encouraging not only in relation to their fairness but in the way in which assessment tasks "enable students to show what they can do" and are designed to promote sustained, rather than rushed, engagement from students in creative writing processes. Your survey of students' assignments suggests that this is supporting some in the achievement of work that is of a near-publishable standard with fine examples of writing craft informed by critical reading. You note, too, the extent to which teaching is grounded in the expertise of staff as reflective, creative practitioners who are "abreast of changes in practice and in the creative industries."

Looking ahead, you note that staff are "beginning to make effective use of the annotated bibliography" and suggest that there is scope for this to be developed further. You also point to occasions where students have produced good work on the basis of a blog that they have kept. We shall certainly look to build on both of these approaches. We shall also address your request for access to electronically marked scripts as part of a wider move in the University towards electronic submission and marking of assignments.

Alongside your own report, we have also received observations from our other External Examiners and feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Survey. We are encouraged to see consistently positive messages from all of these sources and look, of course, both to build on good practice where this is identified and to address any issues that are raised. Please find attached, for your information, a summary of our external examiners' reports along with our action plan for 2015-16 which captures our student scores and

feedback and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

Thank you, once again, for your excellent work on our behalf as External Examiner. We look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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Director

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