



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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Dear External Examiners,

Thank you all for your continued support, and your hard work, in your roles this year. We are indeed very fortunate to have such excellent support and advice. It has been particularly pleasing to see such a wide range of positive comments from you concerning individual modules, administrative systems and support.

This year the School has decided to send a single response to all External Examiners as we felt this might give you all a clearer overview of the issues that have arisen, and the actions that have been taken to address them. If you feel that any issue you raised in your report has not been sufficiently addressed below, please do let us know at your earliest convenience.

First, thank you for your detailed and careful feedback on assessment for individual modules. Where appropriate your comments were fed into the module review process (the report of which is appended for your information); otherwise they were separately discussed between the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the relevant module leaders.

Secondly, there were some general issues arising from module-level comments to which we thought it would be helpful to respond. Some concerns were raised about the consistency of format in which students receive their feedback on essays. Our School procedure is that feedback is usually either via the Grademark system in Turnitin, or a document uploaded to the VLE area. Where colleagues differ from this process (e.g. on a very small recruiting module where feedback can be sent individually) students are notified of this; our students have not raised any concerns about this but we will continue to encourage consistency and clarity, and welcome any such concerns being brought to our attention. Furthermore, we will ensure that in future you are given clear guidance about where to find relevant feedback for individual modules, and apologise for where there was a lack of clarity in this past year's processes.

Various queries or concerns were raised about issues related to the length of assessed work; this is an issue of ongoing concern. As a School we are committed to assessment being devised at module level in order to be pedagogically appropriate for the individual module. We do, however, try to ensure some consistency across the programmes, and make every effort to explain to students any variation. As we move to the new compulsory 40 credit final year project, this issue will be under particularly careful scrutiny with regard to dissertations. It is useful to have External Examiners' perspectives on this from other institutions, and we may well seek your advice about this at a later stage. We also acknowledge your requests to review material

from presentations and other assessments where material is not usually readily available for External Examination, and this is something we will be working on over the course of the coming year.

We were pleased to hear that you see evidence in some modules of module leaders making better use of the 70+ range in marking, but note that there is some concern that the full range is still not being used in all cases – especially where the written feedback does not clearly outline why a higher mark in the range was not awarded. We will continue to encourage colleagues to consider this, and hope that a culture change on this matter will become increasingly evident. We are pleased to note that you all reported confidence in the marks that were awarded.

Thirdly, we were particularly grateful to you all this year for your patience in our application of the new mitigating circumstances system. We still have some work to do on this, but we are pleased to learn that examiners for whom this was not the first year at Leeds recognised a considerable improvement on previous years. We are especially grateful for the advice, documents, links and other resources that all of you have forwarded to us. Some of these have been forwarded to our central Student Cases team and are being followed up at an institutional level. There are, of course, limitations to what we can do within the University of Leeds system, but we are pleased that your feedback indicates that we are exercising due diligence and making improvements where appropriate. We hope next year to streamline this process further in the coming year and look forward to your feedback then.

Finally, we accept your judgement that the present arrangements for External Examining do not allow for sufficient discussion of programme level issues. Given the recent growth in the range and complexity of our programmes we are keenly aware of this concern, and believe it would be useful to have your overview of programme related (rather than module or School level) issues. We do raise External Examiners' programme-level concerns in our programme review process each September, and we will be happy to forward you reports of such programme reviews upon request. We also plan to arrange a short informal meeting during the next examinations period at which we can discuss our programmes with you, and get your feedback on any issues you might care to raise. To this end, I should inform you that as of the new academic year, we have moved away from having two subject-specific assessment staff to have a new Assessment Officer for the whole School, namely <> (<>), with whom some of you have already had some correspondence. We hope that having a single point of contact will enable TRS, Philosophy and HPS External Examiners to have a fruitful dialogue particularly about the cross-disciplinary programmes.

Thank you again for your efforts in supporting student education in PRHS at the University of Leeds, we are proud of the work we do and we are very aware how much we benefit from your expertise.

Yours sincerely,



<> (Head of School)

Module Review Meeting 2015 Report

Review team: <>, <<>>

General Comments:

On the whole reviews were completed carefully and thoughtfully despite, in some cases, not much data being available from the CEQs.

Module leaders were advised separately about comments from External Examiners and these have been addressed (if not in module review then in correspondence with DSE).

Some general points emerged from the discussion:

- Semester one of year one is key for student experience and leaders of modules falling in this semester must be particularly conscious of the role these modules play in introducing students to undergraduate study.
- Consistency about release of materials – ‘if they exist the students should receive them’ was the broad message. This was specifically noted in terms of lectures slides, (though it was recognised that some module leaders do not release material and this does not lead to student dissatisfaction).
- Decisions about module management should be based on pedagogy, not solely on addressing issues such as poor attendance – changing the conversation from being about dealing with recalcitrant students to being about benefitting the keen students.
- Issues about resources, e.g. how the VLE can be used for automated weekly grading or deficiencies in library resources, must be raised with the DSE as soon as they become apparent. We can attempt to source additional resource if we know what is required.
- Discovery modules raise different issues and over the coming year we need to look particularly at how we provide support for assessment tasks for Discovery students. For the coming year Discovery module leaders to be reminded of the importance of providing sufficient guidance for the tasks as part of the module content.
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The team discussed the process for module review and specifically:

- Including module review as part of the programme leader role description to ensure the module review issues are fed into the programme review process
- The importance of handover to next module leader of suggested improvements/changes
- Engagement with the module rep – each module has a rep who sits on SSF and should be used as a source of further information and feedback wherever possible
 - MW to raise this with SSF
- Need to revisit the CEQs which have become very long and are not generating a large amount of data
 - MPX to look into how we might streamline the CEQ, recognising that many questions have been added for specific reasons over time!
- Better response rate through use of laptops/smartphones to complete during lecture – to be encouraged
 - MPX to include in email to colleagues regarding the CEQs next semester
- How the module review meeting informs improved practice
 - MPX to discuss with GG how to raise in AAMs in terms of asking what support we can provide for individuals
 - MPX to contact individuals about specific issues arising for individual modules.

Module specific comments

Module			Comments/suggestions
HPSC	1040	History of Scientific Thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issue here seems to be module’s role in the BA Philosophy – which is for curriculum review to assess. • One student mentioned the course-pack not being available for the first tutorial: it’s important that it should be.
HPSC	2111	Reading Text: History of Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A labour-intensive module which is worthwhile for the students who really get into it but does raise other issues. • Point about low CEQ response noted

HPSC	2115	Introduction to Reading Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting side comment about students only taking this module because they need to “make up” 10 credits. Students want to take Ethics of Life & Death and then have no choice but to take Reading Texts. Suggest this is considered in programme review.
HPSC	2301	History of the Body 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-semester class test is being removed which will address concerns. • Training students in interpreting primary sources is a significant part of some THEO modules, opportunity here for cross-School consultation on methods and expectations in this.
PHIL	1007	Intr to Philosophy of Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of release of slides and other materials was discussed in the meeting, and beyond. Principle agreed in general (see general comments). • Significance of year one semester one modules also discussed and general comment agreed (see general comments above).
PHIL	1025	Intro to Ac Skills: Philosophy	Module being replaced by School-wide module with slightly different emphasis.
PHIL	1101	Intro to Philosophy Discovery	Issue of Discovery experience discussed more generally (see general comments above)
PHIL	1102	Intro to Ethics Discovery	Issue of Discovery experience discussed more generally (see general comments above)
PHIL	2122	Formal Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact hours for next year have been increased. • The module leader (who will be away next year) recommends the use of a grader, so students can have feedback on a weekly or fortnightly exercise. He notes that this is standard practice for such courses in other universities. He also recommends removing some more difficult topics. The newly appointed staff member with responsibility for the module in 15-16 should be given early access to the module review. He should take a view about whether he wants to set regular exercises and whether this is feasible given resource constraints.
PHIL	2221	Ancient Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The module review responds in detail to the qualitative feedback. • In addition to the action points noted, the module leader may wish to review the lecture capture system – to ensure that the end of lectures is recorded.
PHIL	2422	Topics in Epistemology: K&J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The module leader (who will not be teaching the module next year) has made some helpful recommendations in the module review. The newly appointed (temporary) lecturer for this module should have early access to the review. • Has the (permanent) lecturer acted on the recommendation about library resources?
PHIL	3322	Aesthetics & Phil of Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 14-15, the module ran in much the same format as in previous years, when feedback was overall positive, so the lower CEQs this year may not indicate a long term difficulty. • The module leader has met with the Director of Student Education, and to review the 16/4 format for teaching.
PHIL	3522	The Structure of Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The module leader has thought hard about the feedback and has made some helpful recommendations for next year. It will be important to ensure that the new member of staff with responsibility for this module has early access to the module review.
THEO	1025	Intro to Academic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful comments about help with IT and using module guides will inform the design of the new School wide version of this module, PRHS1025.
THEO	2040	Modern Theologians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Level 3 version of this module (which has lectures in common with the Level 2 version) has perfect scores for the gold standard questions. The difficulties with the Level 2 seminars seem to reflect the small cohort this year and the particular needs of these students.

THEO	2720	Religion, Gender and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action points are listed. It might be worth having as an (explicit) action point: consideration of the marking of group work, to allow for variations of performance within the group. The module leader notes that this issue has arisen before.
THEO	3190	Religions & Global Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It might be worth listing as an (explicit) action point: consideration of whether there is too much material in the lectures, given the feedback from one student.
THEO	3280	Religion, Pol and the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds appropriately to demand for further copies of key books – could usefully request these from the Library now, rather than in September. Possible further responses to the e-book problem: 1) The School could usefully raise the issue (again?) with the Library. E.g. petition for copies of chapters of e-books to be made available via the Online Course; 2) A hard-copy readings coursepack might be made available containing copies of relevant e-book chapters required for seminar work. Some comments from the qualitative account e.g. alleged proofing errors in the module documentation, timing of the completion/discussion of log questions, tutorial discussions veering off-topic were not addressed in the review form but might usefully be considered for the coming year.
HPSC	1015	Magic, Science and Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some comments from the qualitative account e.g. about paucity of written feedback on take-home exercise, tutor advertising incorrect assignment deadlines and lecture summary and slides being difficult to match up were not addressed in the review form and could usefully be addressed for the coming year.
PHIL	1008	Introduction to Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues of release of slides was discussed in the meeting, and beyond. Principle agreed in general (see general comments). Supplying the answers to the tutorial questions after the tutorial, so that students can gauge whether or not they've got the answers right, would be a useful addition to current practice. The purpose and role of the tutorials could usefully be revisited and clarified. Programme leaders to be asked to check whether it's explicitly mentioned in our literature that logic is compulsory for various Philosophy programmes (as is typically the case nationwide).
PHIL	1009	Intro to Philosophy of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate revisions to the content of the module and the exam are identified and need to be discussed with DSE quickly to see if there are any options for changing for next year. General comment about the importance of passing on reviews to the next module leader highlighted here. Request for lecture hand-outs unaddressed. General comment above.
PHIL	1060	Interp. Philosophical Texts	No concerns arising
PHIL	2402	Topics in Epistemology: T&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate revisions to the content and teaching format of the module are identified and need to be discussed with DSE quickly to see if there are any options for changing for next year. General comment about the importance of passing on reviews to the next module leader highlighted here. Complaints concerning feedback on essay and draft unaddressed. Some comments from the qualitative account e.g. about discussion of draft essay compromising anonymous marking, unclear module aims and issues with lecture slides are unaddressed and would benefit from some reflection.
PHIL	2532	Philosophy of Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues of release of slides and other materials was discussed in the meeting, and beyond. Principle agreed in general (see general comments).

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on potential imbalance in the presentation of the case for the non-theistic position was not addressed in the review form but has been part of conversations about the module content.
PHIL	3123	Philosophy of Logic & Maths	Late returned form, <> to follow up issues arising.
PHIL	3201	Realism and Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor's suggestion concerning shorter seminars and student comment on VLE resources were not addressed in the form and could usefully be reflected on for next year.
PHIL	3321	Metaethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The module leader needs to continue/really emphasise the message that topics are interrelated and so students can't selectively attend without compromising their ability to understand and attain a good mark in the assessment. Preparation is essential. Also good that extensive and helpful notes are provided pre-lecture and extra office hours are scheduled prior to essay.
PHIL	3424	Adv Top Knowledge/Min d/Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments and results suggest material could be more demanding for level 3. • Given curriculum change suggested revisions probably useful to note for module planning rather than for immediate changes.
THEO	1015	Intro to the Study of Islam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensible responses to the feedback • No action point following comment regarding widening reference material from the course text book.
THEO	1165	Key Texts in Theo & Rel. Stds	The module is being withdrawn so no action points to take forward.
THEO	2320	Theology and Ethical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two of the action points are presented as questions (to think about). There should something more concrete – answers to the questions – especially as there could be resource implications – fewer lectures, more and longer tutorials. If this is the route to go down it can't be for the coming year as too late to make these changes. The question about coherence of lecture and seminar materials (and the purpose of the purpose of the seminars) needs to be answered in order to plan the module for the coming year.
THEO	3286	God, Sex and Gender in Africa	No concerns arising
THEO	3360	The Religious Mapping of Leeds	No concerns arising
PHIL	3020	Dissertation	No concerns arising
THEO	2300	Studying Religion in Context	No concerns arising