

**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:	Geography
Subject(s):	MA Activism and Social Change
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
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](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?*

**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.*

As previous years, the aims and ILOs are commensurate with a Masters level course.  
Standards are appropriate and comparable to Masters level course elsewhere.
  
- 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.*

n/a
  
- 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 are diverse and carefully tailored to the ILOs, providing an excellent mix of skills learning and practice overall. Students were being tested on the doing as well as the thinking – several assignments bring both together.
  
- 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.*

This was an especially strong cohort of students (2014-5), and all achieved well. They are obviously very interested and committed, and stimulated by the teaching and assessment on the course, and this shows through in the quality of the work.

The assessment forms and the independent dissertation do a good job in stretching them and developing their skills and knowledge. The best students produced excellent work this year.
  
- 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
  
- 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 curriculum is an excellent example of a research-led Masters course. The small group of staff teaching on the degree teach from their own cutting edge research. The degree itself has a strong emphasis on research skills and philosophies, particularly thinking through and practicing research that is connected to activism. The result is that students are well versed in participatory and activist research approaches, and able to critically reflect on their practice. They graduate with a strong transferable skill set. This particular combination makes the degree quite unique in the UK.
  
- 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.*

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?**

N/a

- 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

- 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?**

Dates of BoE meetings need to be arranged considerably earlier.

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

Yes, as far as I was aware.

**Other comments**

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

This was the last year this Masters ran in its current form. It has provided a unique, innovative and important model for teaching activist and participatory approaches. It has been passionately taught by committed staff at the research frontier, and student interest learning and value added are obvious. The action research projects conducted as part of dissertations are especially unique and commendable, resulting in a strong transferable skill set.

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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24/03/16

Dear

**Response to the External Examiner's Report for the MA in Activism and Social Change**

We thank you very much for your External Examiner's report on the MA in Activism and Social Change for 2014-15 and for the work you have done as External over many years.

We are delighted with the positive comments you have once again provided regarding the overall programme, and in particular we are pleased to note your comments about the excellent assessment methods used and the overall quality of the students' work.

As we outlined, this was the last year that the MA in Activism and Social Change and we are now running a new programme in Global Urban Justice for academic year 2015-16.

We have noted your comment about the need for dates of Exam Board meetings to be arranged with more notice and will take that on board for next year.

Thank you, again, for your contribution over the years.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

Cc:

Head of School