

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 Performance and Cultural Industries
Subject(s):	BA Managing Performance
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Designated modules: PECI2104 Independent Industry Study; PECI2301 Managing in Arts Organisations; PECI2302 Arts Marketing; PECI2303 Cultural Entrepreneurship; PECI3107 Enterprise Project; PECI3109 Contemporary Issues in the Cultural Industries; PECI3301 Strategic Arts Management; PECI9904 Year in Industry.
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

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?

N/A

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 programme Aims and ILOs still seem to me to be entirely appropriate (this is my fourth report as external examiner) – challenging, aiming at standards of professional competence defined by cultural industry insiders not by academics, and feasibly achievable given the quality of teaching evidenced.

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.*

This is a niche programme, practically unique to Leeds. National subject benchmarks are not applicable. Staff have an expert understanding of real-world performance management expectations, and the programme succeeds in explaining these to students.

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.*

Assessment methods (thoroughly tried and tested by now) are well designed and well structured. They have real-world roots in some cases (business planning exercises and reflective accounts contextualizing actual work experience, e.g.) and make rigorous demands both of students and of markers.

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. Students were given ample opportunity to demonstrate their achievements. BA Managing Performance is a programme particularly benefiting students with cultural-entrepreneurial flair, supporting their efforts to gain practical experience and equipping them with useful knowledge. Those determined to make the most of opportunities on offer continue to produce high quality work; those less inclined to exercise initiative inevitably get less out of it.

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 noted few substantive changes. Course documents are refreshed from year to year. Sensibly, in view of government disinvestment from the subsidized arts sector, the programme encourages students to think about "Managing" in broad terms: they develop an impressive range of transferable skills. Most if not all of the modules available to BA Managing Performance students will or could be delivered to students on other programmes in future. [BA Managing Performance itself is winding down – its last-ever student intake, 2013-14's, will graduate in 2016.]

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.

Research personally undertaken by members of the School continues to exert a strong and healthy influence on curriculum design and features (as it should) in reading lists. Learning and teaching happens in a lively yet practically-grounded intellectual atmosphere. Though I think that some of the theory to which students are introduced lacks empirical validity it certainly exists: students need to know about it and know how to critique it effectively.

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.

Fully sufficient, 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.

I was fully, efficiently and as always very courteously briefed. Thanks.

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?

I was asked to comment in advance on two exam questions and willingly did so, suggesting very minor modifications. These were made. I am confident that the nature and level of all other assessment tasks was appropriate.

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; yes. As in previous years it seemed to me that some scripts were too extensively annotated (when feedback reports conveyed much the same information in continuous prose form) – but from the students' point of view this would hardly count as a fault.

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

N/A. I did not examine dissertations.

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?

Administrative arrangements were more than satisfactory. I spent a day in Leeds sampling work and checking marks and I attended two consecutive Board of Examiners' meetings the following day. I was fully satisfied with Board recommendations.

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

My notes on individual 2014-15 modules closely resemble those taken in previous years. If colleagues wish to read them I will willingly make them available. Small suggestions for improvement made at the start of my term of office as external examiner were followed as far as possible within the University of Leeds policy framework. I do not think that further changes are necessary, nor do I think that this report requires any form of response.

FACULTY OF PERFORMANCE, VISUAL ARTS and COMMUNICATIONS
EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT: SCHOOL RESPONSE

School:	PCI
Programme(s):	Performance Design BA
External Examiner:	
Academic Session:	2014-15

Comment:	Response / Action:
<p>There is clear evidence of the influence of staff research interests in all aspects of the Performance Design modules. This is evident in the overall ethos of these modules, where scenography is approached as generative and innovative methodology for the study of theatre and performance rather than as a set of craft skills, or as tied to one aspect of theatre and performance.</p>	<p>We are pleased that this is evident through student work. This ethos has underpinned the Performance Design programme from the start.</p>
<p>As in previous years, I found the content, design and delivery of the Performance Design modules (PECI 2401 Image-based Performance, PECI 2403 Design Presentation and PECI 3401 Scenographic Scheme) to be of a high standard. The two second and one third year module provide a valuable and distinctive approach towards the study of theatre and performance, offering students an opportunity to consider theatre and performance from a scenographic perspective.</p> <p>The range of assessment methods and the skills and knowledge these reflect are, I believe, one of the programme's significant strengths, allowing students with different aptitudes and interests to flourish and to extend their expertise.</p>	<p>We are pleased that the external examiner notes continued high standards in the Performance Design curriculum and in the ways that is assessed.</p>
<p>I hope that elements of the distinctive scenographic approach towards the study of theatre and performance offered at the University of Leeds can be carried through into the revised undergraduate programme and into the new Masters programme in Performance Design.</p>	<p>We continue to look for ways to ensure that the new Theatre & Performance programme can reflect and address scenography as a way of making and thinking about performance.</p>
Head of School:	
Programme Director:	
Date:	9 Nov 2015