

# 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 Languages, Cultures and Societies
Subject(s):	Spanish Language
Programme(s) / Module(s):	SPPO1010, SPPO1090, SPPO1091, SPPO1092, SPPO2010, SPPO2011, SPPO2580, SPPO3010, SPPO3062, SPPO3420, SPPO3640
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA(Hons) Spanish BA(Hons) Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies

#### 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?*

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*

Since I started my position as an external examiner five years ago, I have been really impressed with the programme of study, the level of students and the responsiveness of tutors. Year after year there has been evidence of fine tuning and innovation in some elements of the modules demonstrating the dedication of the teaching staff.

During this period of time there have been some important changes in the administration, curriculum, evaluation and feedback processes. One evident change has been increased familiarisation and use of the VLE. The VLE has had a major impact on how information, resources and feedback are made available to students. Tutors are now making an excellent use of this space uploading their written and oral feedback as well as PowerPoints and links of interest. It is excellent to see that students have a virtual home for each module where they can access key learning information at any time. (Further developments in the past year are stated in point 6 below.) Another important component of the programme that has been enhanced over the years is the portfolio type of assessment which includes a meaningful range of activities.

The administrative arrangements were immediately improved once a coordinator was in place. She has ensured that I could carry out my responsibilities as an external examiner. Since then, I have been sent soft copies of the relevant exam drafts at the appropriate times. I would like to encourage the department to continue with this practice of nominating a contact person for

externals. In fact, this person could also help with access to the VLE, access to the handbooks and minutes of the Board beforehand as well as access to academic responses to the externals' reports. These are actions concerning the administrative side of things that still need a bit of attention.

## 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 aims and ILOs are appropriate as indicated in previous reports.

**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.*

Yes, they did. Please see previous reports.

**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 are varied and appropriate. There was a good range of marks and overall good use of the grading scale.

However, the programme could benefit from discussing the following issues:

- There seems to be an implicit understanding among academics about how the higher marks are used but this understanding on how to achieve top marks is not currently spell out to students, perhaps in their handbooks.
- The criteria for oral assessment are appropriate for presentations but do not reflect interaction (e.g. performance at debates). A different grid needs to be produced for interactive assignments. The current percentages for language and content should also be reconsidered.
- The use of English vs target language in assessment rubrics and feedback. It is advisable that the department agrees on a language policy with respect to how assessment tasks are communicated to students. In relation to this, it will be important to define references to the assessment tasks in each language. For instance, the written exam refers to the choice of an "essay topic" but the actual task in Spanish refers to an "artículo de opinión" which is a very different type of text genre. This harmonisation of use of language could be coordinated at programme level for a more coherent student experience.

(See also 2013/14 report on the need to highlight more the formative elements of assessment included in each module.)

**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, as previously reported.

**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.*

A few examples of good practice I could identify this year are:

- In SPPO2010 Practical Language Skills in Spanish, students are encouraged to use the resources at the Language Centre and Instituto Cervantes. This is in fact advice that should be applied across the board for all modules. I would like to encourage the Department to think of a strategic way to send this message consistently across the qualification. An ideal place could be an online space that all the language students could access for generic information.
- SPPO3640 Open Lives has introduced an excellent feedback action plan that could be applied to other modules.
- SPPO3010 Practical Language Skills in Spanish could be used as a model for high quality of exam design which incorporate sample answers as a means to test the appropriateness of the tasks set for the exam.

**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 Spanish language modules are a great example for the sector on the immediate application of current educational research to language teaching and learning. The academics in these modules should ensure that they share this very best practice.

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.*

Please see comments on my 2013/14 report as these apply to this academic year.

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.*

Please see comments on my 2013/14 report as these apply to this academic year.

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 to both questions. The coordinator sent me all the draft examination papers and my feedback was considered by the academics and implemented as 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 to both questions.

I would like to mention that all the academics of the modules I examined prepared very useful information to facilitate my evaluation of the standards. The organisation before the Board of Examiners was superb. Particularly commendable was the information on the moderation process that I was provided for SPPO3010, where I was given a detailed record of markers' substantial notes on each individual student performance. This made the evaluation very transparent and clear to me.

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

N/A

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?

Yes. The administrative arrangements of the Board were fantastic. My only request here is that externals could receive the minutes of the previous examiners' meeting beforehand.

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

Please see report from 2012/13.

#### Other comments

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

Perhaps I can leave here some general suggestions for future enhancements of the programme:

- Design and implement a policy on e-assessment. This will support and simplify for students and lecturers, the submission, feedback and marking processes.

- When possible, the programme should aim at having assignments marked by computers. This possibility is evident for those language modules where assessment tasks are based on multiple-choice questions. Tools for computer-marked assignments are available in Blackboard, and externally free of charge. In fact, research has indicated the many benefits of using this type of activity for self-assessment.
- Improve access to VLE for external examiners. Ideally, the VLE could be set to support the exchange of exam drafts and access to student samples prior to the Board of examiners.
- Consider developing an outcome based approach to the Qualification, including the design of an assessment strategy across the Qualification, as opposed to a module by module approach. This will ensure a consistent and coherent learning experience for students.
- Strengthen the connections with the language modules in the Languages for All programme.

You have an outstanding programme of study from which I have learnt a great deal. All the best in the years to come. I am really grateful to have had this opportunity of examining at Leeds.

**School of Modern Languages and Cultures**  
**Spanish, Portuguese and**  
**Latin American Studies**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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25 April 2016

Dear

Now that all External Examiners' reports have been internally processed, I would like to respond to both the general comments from all Externals and the specific recommendations which you made in your report in relation to the academic session 2014/2015.

I would first like to thank all Externals for the positive comments about the overall quality of the subject area's work, the diversity of modules we offer supported by a strong research culture, the high level of student achievement and the variety and rigour of the assessment procedures, as well as the efficiency of the marking, feedback and exams administration. In return I would also like to thank all Externals for their work and support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Exams Board.

We are delighted to read your praise about the various improvements to our language and translation programmes this year, such as the incorporation of tasks to develop employability skills.

You express some concern in your report regarding the need for greater clarity in the way we show students how to obtain top marks. Please be reassured that colleagues are aware of this and consistently indicating ways to improve performance at the highest levels. Our colleagues in the Spanish language sub-section are working to improve the grid for assessing oral presentations in order to assess students' interaction skills as requested. We have also taken on board your recommendations regarding the consistent use of English and Spanish in assessment sheets so we are in a better position to guarantee a more coherent student experience.

You also commented on the need for improving our communication with External Examiners. This year greater attention is being paid to the provision of module handouts, marking criteria and selected assessed pieces of work for Externals. Access to our Virtual Learning Environment has also been provided in order to enable you to monitor the digital submission of work. We are at the moment working on strengthening the use of the electronic resources available in order to guarantee that a more extensive use of digital submission and marking is in place.

Regarding our academic relationship with the Language for All programme, I am happy to inform you that some positive progress is being made this year after their team moved into the same building as SPLAS. Being on the same floor and sharing facilities with them has very much favoured this development.

Your positive comments about the departmental work and, in particular, the Spanish-language teaching section have already been passed on to colleagues.

Finally, I should like to thank you once again for your generosity, hard work, professionalism and support over the course of the last years and look forward to maintaining our successful collaboration with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

**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:	Faculty of Arts/School of Modern Languages
Subject(s):	<i>Spanish</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	SPPO 1060; SPPO 1045; SPPO 2680; SPPO 2681; SPPO 2690; SPPO 2691; SPPO 3050; SPPO 3240; SPPO 3361; SPPO 3660; SPPO 3070; SPPO 3540
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](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*

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.*

Being this my second year at this post, I can confirm what I already mentioned last year about the high standards enjoyed by Leeds. This is, in my opinion, one of the most outstanding departments in the country in the subject of Hispanic Studies.

**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 programme offered in the BA Spanish is certainly comparable to that of other universities in the UK. The strength of the curriculum and the expertise of its teaching staff is nearly unique.

**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.*

I am extremely happy with the diverse methods of assessment and the marking arrangements. I welcome that seminar work is included by most units in the final overall mark. The marking process is extremely sound: students get spacious feedback and comments (and there is evidence of discussion between internal markers over the final mark). The quality of essays and scripts demonstrate the good preparation and understanding achieved by the students.

**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.*

Student performance was overall in line with other similar institutions in the UK.

**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.*

As I mentioned before, it is impressive the breadth of the curriculum in Leeds, practically unique in the UK. It is not easy to see such a cluster of historian/hispanists collaborating so efficiently in different jointly taught units based on their own research and interests. Excellent!

**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.*

I have already mentioned above the close link between research and teaching (as well as the ability of staff members to collaborate in joint teaching projects). I would like to single out as well as congratulate, for instance, a recently introduced unit: SPP0 3050 (Things can only get better)

**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, entirely adequate and always received in time. Thank you

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.*

As above, I was kept informed throughout the year and received all the relevant information. I am indebted for their admirable work and generosity with their time to <> <>.

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 received all papers/assessments in time. They were appropriate and my comments and suggestions were later promptly implemented.

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. Feedback is lengthy, appropriate and relevant. All material was made available to me.

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

The choice of dissertations was appropriate and the quality was exceptional. All external examiners agreed to raise the final marks.

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 did attend the meeting. There is still unclear to me the possibility of an external to influence some of the marks or classifications or the importance/relevance of special circumstances. Otherwise, the meeting was excellently and very professionally conducted.

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

I feel they need to be given more time and discussion (unless arrangements that I am not aware of had already been decided).

## Other comments

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

During my preliminary report to the board, I already shared some of my suggestions, concerns and ideas. As a whole, I would like to congratulate this department for teaching one of the most sophisticated and impressive degrees in the subject of Hispanic Studies in the UK. I would be grateful (for mere time purposes) if (as I suggested) some sample work could be chosen by each unit leader (with appropriate comments if necessary) to be given to the external during the long marking/supervising day at Leeds instead of just

dropping him with close folders with hundreds of written work.

The quality of a good deal of student work was admirable. I myself suggested to raise by three points two units. I would recommend to study ways to reward students at the higher band of the first year class. Comments recognized that quality and then the final mark was of 72. I think top class performance should be much higher rewarded with marks in the high 70s or even in the 80s,

Finally, I would like to share the unhappiness shared by many colleagues by the fact that the exam board took place at the same time of an Open Day.

**School of Languages, Cultures and Societies**  
**Spanish, Portuguese and**  
**Latin American Studies**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

25 April 2016

Dear

Now that all External Examiners' reports have been internally processed, I would like to respond to both the general comments from all Externals and the specific recommendations which you made in your report in relation to the academic session 2014/2015.

I would first like to thank all Examiners for the positive comments about the overall quality of the subject area's work, the diversity of modules we offer supported by a strong research culture, the high level of student achievement and the variety and rigour of the assessment procedures, as well as the efficiency of the marking, feedback and exams administration. In return I would also like to thank you for your hard work and kind support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Exams Board.

As requested in your report, I will ask SPLAS members of staff to choose a selection of the assignments that more urgently need your supervision and moderation in the summer Marks Meeting. As internal markers, we will also take on board the necessity of being slightly more generous with our marks in the First Class band so strong students' work and achievements are duly acknowledged. Moreover, we have requested the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies not to set our Marks Meeting on the same date as an Open Day in order to guarantee the attendance of all members of staff.

Your positive comments about the work of SPLAS and, in particular, the Spanish section have already been passed on to colleagues.

Finally, I should like to thank you once again for your work and support over the year, and look forward to continuing to collaborate so productively with you this academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Exams Officer  
University of Leeds

Leeds LS1 JT9  
T. 0113

## 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 Languages, Cultures and Societies
Subject(s):	<i>Latin American Studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	SPPO 3094 Extended essay SPPO 1160 Intro Cultural Prod: Spain SPPO 2430 Modern Spanish-American Lit SPPO 2431 Modern Spanish-American Lit SPPO 2510 Latin America (c1800-c1930) SPPO 2511 Latin America (c1800-c1930) SPPO 2670 Issues in Hisp & Lusophn Cinema SPPO 2671 Issues in Hisp & Lusophn Cinema SPPO 3510 Toussaint to Obama SPPO 3670 Crime and Punishment in Contemporary Latin American Culture SPPO 3680 Cultural Crosscurrents in Spanish and Portuguese Latin America
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

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Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building  
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**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*

There may be a need to take a global look at assessment, because I know some elements (for example, having to produce work in a second language), that have been introduced over time, and were dropped in some modules but not in others. It might be useful to consider consistency and retain a logical development for the student in the assessment.

**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*

The range of assessments is very good and the professionalism of the staff is in evidence in the organisation of the modules and in the high quality work produced.

The work produced by the students is always of a very high standard and, previously, feedback had been excellent.

The standard of the final year work in 2014/15 was very high. Some modules had averages in the 68 and upwards range, which is unprecedented, but is also merited. The student work was very engaged and even engaging. There were some student essays, in particular in the module, SPPO3510 From Toussaint to Obama: Resistance in the African Diaspora, that were a pleasure to read. I note the changes in assessment in this module - in particular in relation to the primary source analysis

exercise and the absence of the Bob Marley question in the essays - that have really encouraged students to be more focused and carry out original research, in the case of the first, and mitigated against the weaker fan essay in the latter.

I felt the lack of the film and Chican@ offering because of staff leave.

The number of staff changes in Latin American studies has had a marked effect on the quality and precision in feedback in 2014/15. There has been inconsistent use of feedback forms within and across modules. Second markers' and moderators' comments are very brief and, generally, there has been little or no clarity in how final marks are reached. This is notable when a mark is changed and there is no evidence of the discussion or dissent that sometimes led to a reduction in marks. This was notable where one dissertation was concerned that was brought down from 67 to 70, without evidence of why. I asked for this to be reviewed. Also, many of the feedback forms were handwritten which sometimes made them difficult to read.

I note that online marking is to become the norm in 2015/16, however, online marking is currently rarely used, there was only one example of feedback on scripts being digitally generated in Word, but nothing in Turnitin. In previous years, there teaching staff did use online marking. This system might help with student feedback and save on time and confusion about forms used.

It does appear that temporary and new staff were not fully supported in the post and the absence of several full time and long-serving staff members was evident in the inconsistencies. Also, over my time as extern there has been a new teaching fellow each year for the past three years. As these are really research posts, the fellows have gone on to take up posts as lecturers or full-time researchers at other universities.

## 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.*

These are consistently followed and are well mapped out.
  
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.*

Yes.
  
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 range of types of assessment is excellent. The students are asked to carry out work that reflect the intended learning outcomes of the modules. This leads to varied and interesting forms of assessment that are challenging and appropriate.
  
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, these are evidenced throughout.
  
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.*

See, above, on SPPO3510.
  
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.*

As well as the introductory modules in level 1 and 2, the lecturers teach to their specialisms, which are mostly offered in final year. As active researchers they consistently revise the modules to reflect current developments in the field and provide opportunities for the students to learn from this expertise.
  
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**

## 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, this was consistent throughout the modules and across the different levels.

- 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.

- 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 was given a good sample of work and could access other materials from the modules, if required.

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

There were very original and, in one case exemplary, dissertations produced. As ever, with work in this field there is a matter of the top 30 percentile being used fully. The word exemplary was used a few times for work and I could not see why the student was awarded marks below 80. If I can't see it, the students definitely cannot. Either the marks should be re-considered or richer feedback to these exemplary students needs to be provided.

- 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?**

Yes, this ran smoothly. However, we have asked for feedback on our comments that we were assured were written up, but did not reach any of the external examiners. This is a matter that has been brought up in previous years.

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

Yes, these were evidently dealt with in advance and advice was given on these students, where appropriate.

#### Other comments

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

The administrative and teaching staff engaged fully and professionally with the process. I was able to get a full overview of the modules and the programme. I have enjoyed getting the opportunity to gain an insight into a section with staff who carry out innovative work as teachers and researchers.

**School of Languages, Cultures and Societies**  
**Spanish, Portuguese and**  
**Latin American Studies**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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25 April 2016

Dear

Now that all External Examiners' reports have been internally processed, I would like to respond to both the general comments from all Externals and the specific recommendations which you made in your report in relation to the academic session 2014/2015.

I would first like to thank all Externals for the positive comments about the overall quality of the subject area's work, the diversity of modules we offer supported by a strong research culture, the high level of student achievement and the variety and rigour of the assessment procedures, as well as the efficiency of the marking, feedback and exams administration. In return I would also like to thank all Externals for their hard work and kind support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Exams Board. SPLAS at Leeds also thanks you for your collaboration and dedication as an External Examiner over the last four years.

Secondly, I would like to renew my apologies for your not receiving my responses in previous years. This is something that has been internally checked and we now have a more efficient communications strategy in place so External Examiners can read our responses to their valuable reports.

You express some concern in your report regarding the lack of clear evidence of the conversation held by first markers and moderators on feedback sheets. We bear this in mind and have informed colleagues of the need for greater detail in the form especially where there is disagreement and a change of marks needs to be made. We hope those actions taken will avoid confusion in the future. As for your comments about new, temporary members of staff in the field of Latin American Studies and their need for extra support during the academic year, we can confirm that we are taking extra care of the two new colleagues this year in order to avoid past mistakes and lack of much-needed academic and professional support. We also acknowledge your very valid concerns about the effects that the lack of investment in permanent lecturers has had on the student experience in this field and will continue to press for further investment in this area.

Finally, thank you once again for your work over the last years. We have all very much benefited from your comments and professionalism and you will be sorely missed. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Yours sincerely,