

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:	Performance and Cultural Industries
Subject(s):	<i>Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship PECI 5105M Creative Work PECI 5204M Theoretical Perspectives PECI 5205M Critical Debates in Culture PECI 5207M Arts Management and Cultural Leadership PECI 5208M Cultural Policy: Models and Debates PECI 5201M Research Projects
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.

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

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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?

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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 Master's in Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship has changed and developed considerably since I was first appointed as external examiner. It has developed both in response to reflects changes in staffing and Faculty strengths and expertise and also importantly to developments in the (interdisciplinary) field and the market for Master's qualifications of this type. The changes represent significant improvement to learning and teaching, particularly in the area of provision for practice-based learning and research and also for integration of teaching about creative enterprise with cultural policy, arts management and cultural leadership as key contexts for cultural and creative entrepreneurship on the global stage.

Whilst these curricular changes have been instituted the programme has continued to pay close attention to the needs and interests of students who continue to be predominantly overseas, from South East Asian, and from a variety of backgrounds, and to provide opportunities for students to reflect and research their own experiences of culture, for example in relation to culture and development and international cultural policy transfer. The ongoing development of research training, academic advisement and study support, particularly in relation to academic writing in English, means that student attainment reaches highly satisfactory standards. The demonstration of theoretical understanding and research skills in written assessments and dissertations by non-EFL students is of particular note.

The marking rubrics and feedback sheets that I see continue to be extremely detailed and useful to students for formative and summative feedback. The leadership of the programme is exemplary, with <<>> and <<>> collaborating with colleagues across the Faculty to ensure that the programme has an interesting range of inputs from different disciplinary, experience and practice bases. This is not an easy thing to achieve in the current context of wider change in higher education, with new pressures on both UG and PG taught programmes and their delivery, and the programme is not only flourishing but also looking at areas where it can expand and where it supports delivery of other Master's programmes. I thoroughly comment all involved in CCE for continuing to make it such a successful programme in terms of student outcomes, and in particular <<>> and <<>> for careful stewardship and management.

In terms of the process of external examining, there has been a rather consistent issue with receiving mark sheets, mark grids and access to VLE for all the taught course elements at the correct time and in a coherent fashion, which has made examining not as straightforward as it could be – and so perhaps some further administration support could help to coordinate this further? However the arrangements for the exam boards in terms of accommodation and travel has always been brilliant and I am very grateful to the various professional support staff involved for their quick response and attention, especially when I've had a problem or question.

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's Aims and ILOs are appropriate to the achievement of Master's degree qualification in this subject area. The programme provides an excellent balance of theoretical perspectives, research training and practical examples of creative and cultural entrepreneurship, cultural policy and development in action, and cultural and creative management. It also has developed new opportunities to gain insights into professional practice and to undertake work-based learning through placements in Creative Work and through the Performance and Collaborative Enterprise course unit.

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 aims and ILOs meet those expected for a programme targeted at developing creative and cultural professionals, and supporting research and understanding of relevant practices and processes within the sector; it is of a commensurate standard and scope to similar, competitor programmes.

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 offer a range of different assessment practices which allow students to demonstrate their teaching and learning of theoretical debates, research perspectives and practical skills appropriate to both research and professional development for those wanting to work in and with the creative and cultural sector.

Student performance reflects the teaching and assessment methods very well – particularly in terms of the demonstration of engagement with Research perspectives seen in the Research projects, and also the student performance for the Performance and Collaborative Enterprise module.

Creative work encourages students to identify, situate and reflect on their experiences in placements with organisations and to explore related issues and debates for creative and cultural workers. The teaching and learning for reflective practice in particular show a marked influence on providing students with the tools to explore their own work, and the issues affecting their organisations as case studies. However, there is still room perhaps for clearer briefing on writing up student work placements – it would have been great to have been able to read more about the roles and tasks students took within their organisations, as the samples I saw were rather abstracted from the work itself and it wasn't clear whether students clearly understood what was expected of them. Perhaps the assignment two would be better described as a report, rather than an essay, and they could be introduced to report writing as a different kind of writing? However the links between the two assignments – and the mark progression for this cohort – suggests that they work well in giving formative feedback and improving students' attainment.

The programme continues to deliver the right content to install in students a very clear sense of the importance of theoretical perspectives and empirical research to their understanding of the creative and cultural sector. Theoretical perspectives introduces and consolidates key concepts, Some really impressed work is produced for this module – which shows in the main progression between the first and second assignments – at the upper end students have produced work with high levels of sophistication, advanced research and writing skills and originality. At the middle and lower ranges, students are still engaging with key concepts through relevant course reading.

Cultural policy provides comprehensive introduction and support for structural issues, and arts management and cultural leadership provides further understanding of critical issues in arts management. It gives students a really fantastic introduction to advance level research skills and understanding which will set them up for future careers, whether as researchers or creative and cultural professionals (or both).

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.*

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.

The new module of Performance and Collaborative Enterprise provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop team working, collaboration, project management, delivery and evaluation skills through a real-life brief which they are asked to provide a creative response. The outstanding results of the assessment of this module show how clearly students engaged with this form of practice-based learning. It is really important to include this kind of practice on the programme, and to offer students the chance to learn consultancy skills as this will enhance employability.

Creative work provides opportunity for consideration of organisations and enterprises, their challenges and practices, from the inside, as well as reflective practice on the part of the student as experiential learner. There is still room for more information about own practice and role within the organisation, however – and the mark range from this module and relatively low attainment suggests that students are not always clear about the brief that they are presented with – particularly in terms of the first assignment (as above).

It is sad that Culture and Development was not on the curriculum this year due to staff changes, as it is an area which students clearly engage with as they are able to develop their skills and understanding relevant to different global experiences of the use of culture and creativity for social, cultural and economic benefits. However this gap has been filled to some extent by students' research topics for dissertation as well as other case studies explored in taught course unit assessments. I'm glad to hear that it will be making a return in next year's curriculum through a new Culture and Place module, as it is a cornerstone of the programme.

Further good practice can be identified in the carefully designed opportunities for formative feedback, and for tutorial support as well as in-session English language and writing support. Further good practice lies in the ways in which curriculum reflects the strengths of the Faculty in cultural policy, audience research, and creative industries, in particular but also through the interdisciplinary contributions provided by other guest contributions. Through refining the curriculum and developing the programme specification there is now an even-handed opportunity for different paths through optional units which allow comprehensive range and choice for students along core and compulsory taught elements.

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 assessment tasks for Research perspectives (critique of an article followed by research proposal) are very well designed to support research development and preparation for research projects, particularly in terms of methodology and literature review. The distinction between the requirements for CCE and for WPP are more clearly set out than in previous years in the handbook. There is a useful reading list, and the materials on the VLE are organised into learning resources by programme areas. The content of the programme using lectures and supporting tutorials and seminar group work is rich and relevant, and appears to be successful in leading to learning outcomes demonstrated by the research projects. These show confidence in designing and tackling complex issues and debates through empirical research, and applying appropriate methods for research and analysis on primary

and secondary materials. I particularly like the way that even in the weaker research projects there is a clear sense of how to establish a research 'problem' which is examined through structured argument, supported by evidence.

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 I received sufficient access to guidance on this role.

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 I received the appropriate documentation – although there could be better coordination of the timing and organisation of materials for examining (see Section B above).

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 was given the opportunity to comment on draft essay titles and other assessments and all was found satisfactory.

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?

I saw adequate sampling for all course units, and had access to all work via the VLE. The feedback sheets were comprehensive and clearly written (typed) and comments on assessments on the VLE were also clearly annotated.

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

The research projects were extremely interest in their choice of topic, and also in the research approaches taken and designed by students. As above even at the lower end they showed clear originality and intent, and those receiving higher marks were excellent pieces of work which make a contribution to the field.

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?

As above, although there were some issues with getting all of the correct materials at the same time, the organisation of the Board (which I attended) was excellent, and the processes of deliberation and recommendation for any particular issues or cases were exemplary.

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

It has been a pleasure to have held this role for three years, and to see the programme progress. I hope to support the new external examiner through mentoring and look forward to hearing about the successes of the programme and the PCI in the future.

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

School:	Performance and Cultural Industries
Programme(s):	MA Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship
External Examiner:	
Academic Session:	2014-15

Comment:	Response / Action:
This is last year as our external examiner, and we have received excellent input on curriculum development of the MA CCE throughout term. has been a responsive and thorough examiner, and we very much appreciate supportive comments on this final report.	
Creative Work – Some students were not successful in finding placements during spring 2015 and so wrote alternate assignments for the second assessment. This may explain the lack of specificity about student roles and activities on the placements that points out in report.	The programme manager will continue to work with staff teaching on the module to develop and refine the assessments in response to comments.
Practice-based learning – We appreciate supportive comments about Performance and Collaborative Enterprise (PACE). While this module was conceived initially for performance-based courses in the school, it has become a very popular spring option module for MA CCE students too.	Continue to expand the course's practice-based learning opportunities with new modules in spring 2016: Enterprise and Consultancy Practice and Audience Engagement and Impact.
Process of external examining – We have discussed concerns about prompt receipt of a complete set of materials for examining with and will discuss our process with the SES staff and other MA programme managers to improve for 2016.	
Head of School:	
Programme Director:	
Date:	20/04/2016