

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:	Music
Subject(s):	<i>Music</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Masters in Performance, Computer Music, Musicology, Composition
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA/MMus

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?

Yes

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

- 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.*

All Learning Outcomes, Programme Aims, and standards were appropriate, clear, and of a standard comparable at other UK universities.
- 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 quality of teaching is clearly very high as evidenced by the academic achievements of the majority of the students. There was a wide range of appropriate assessment methods, as one would expect from degrees and modules of a highly differentiated nature.

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, the submission briefs were clearly designed to allow the students to shine in their area of specialisation. Strengths and weaknesses of the various cohorts were not essentially different from any other institution offering similar programmes.

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 (this is my first year)

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.

Staff teaching on the modules I oversaw were clearly experts in their field. Their research clearly has an impact on the module specialisations, as is correct and to be expected. I had a strong sense of students engaging with staff research.

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 it was

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 did.

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 all

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 and yes.

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

Yes and 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?

On the whole yes (but see below); I was not able to attend; but having read the minutes I am happy with the 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

I was very impressed with the level of detail in the feedback. I think all staff involved with the courses under my remit as external examiner are to be highly commended on the quite obvious dedication and attention to detail that they show to their students in writing such thoughtful and thought-provoking critiques of their work.

Whilst on the whole marks spreadsheets and feedback forms were well organised, a few were missing data or had incorrect data. A minor point: for overview purposes and improved quick access to data, filenames for marks could include the course name as well as its number (as was the case in feedback folders).

Now might be a good time to require USB sticks and avoid the submission of discs (the latest laptops no longer have disc drives for reading CDs and DVDs).

Suggestion: in modules where a final assessment is agreed with a tutor, ask the student to email or otherwise submit their understanding of what has been agreed (just in case something comes to appeal).

Another (not so important) suggestion: Despite conventions/requirements for single-sided submissions of dissertations etc. I would advise scores to be submitted double-sided, as is the professional convention.

Performance programme notes: if it's not done as a matter of course already, it might be worth clarifying to the students who the target audience is. (Some included highly technical terms which non-specialist audience members might struggle with.)

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

17 December 2015

Dear

Many thanks for your report on the 2014-15 session of the taught postgraduate programmes for Performance, Computer Music, Musicology, and Composition, and for all of your encouragement and comments. To address your specific comments in order:

- Your suggestion for technology modules to move to USB submissions (over optical formats) has been actioned for this year. We are also exploring the possibility of an online submission process that can handle very large files, which would obviate the need for submission of physical drives entirely.
- Submission guidelines for the composition modules now specify double-sided printing for scores.
- Your comment regarding appropriateness of jargon in programme notes has been passed on to the relevant module leaders and tutors.

With best wishes,

Head of School

Examinations Officer

Director of Student Education