

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies
Subject(s):	Fine Art
Programme(s) / Module(s):	ARTF2001,2040, 3061, 3062, 3080
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

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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

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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 ILOs are appropriate and from my mid year visit it was evident to me that the learning outcomes are embedded in both the structure and the content of the programme.
The ILOs are appropriate for the award of a BA Fine Art and the standard and the work produced by students was also of the appropriate standard.

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 of the ILOs are fully compliant with the expectations of the national subject benchmark and outcomes produced on the programme are comparable to similar programmes at other institutions.

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 presentation of student work in the form of an exhibition and a written dissertation are appropriate methods for the assessment of their work. From my mid year visit it was evident that students were fully aware of the methods of assessment and that the staff team had clearly communicated the design and structure of the assessments. Students produced ambitious work for both their written and exhibition work and it was clear to me that the level of teaching was of a high standard. At the marks meeting staff were clear about how they had arrived at their marks and I consider their methods of marking to be both appropriate and rigorous. However I did note a resistance to going over the mark of 79 and in to the 80s and 90s mark range raising the question of what would a student need to demonstrate to get into this range.

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.*

In general students did have the opportunity to demonstrate what they had achieved on the programme. Some of the exhibiting spaces are awkward and the technical equipment has some limitations but students demonstrated an ability to respond creatively to these restrictions. It was evident from the exhibition that students are fully engaged with contemporary art practice and that each student had adopted an individual stance towards the field. A clear strength of the cohort is that as individuals they are pursuing an independent practice but as the exhibitions demonstrates they work well as a group. It was a strength that students took the lead in curating the final exhibition and that staff had clearly supported and encouraged this. However this was a relatively small cohort so maintaining this dynamic will be a challenge for staff as student numbers grow. I believe there is a need to improve on the form of the contextual support material that students are required to present. Overall I found the presentation of this material not helpful in terms of my understanding how the student thinks and progress their work. I also think that artist statements should be a mandatory requirement for the assessment process and not optional. There was not an abnormal level of students in the 2:2 category but as student numbers grow it will be a question as how best to support these students and in particular how to get them to engage with the teaching programme.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

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.

There was a noticeable advance in the use of film and digital media. It was also evident that students were working effectively as a group this was demonstrated in the way they organised their final exhibition and events around the final show. I noted developments in the way some students organised their contextual materials in terms of making it clearer how their work evolved over the year however this clarity of presentation of contextual materials was not evident across the whole of the cohort.

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.

At my mid-year visit students stated that they received a high level of support from the teaching staff. It is evident that staff research interests are reflected in the work students produce and that students are steered towards relevant developments in the field of contemporary art practice. The excellent visiting artist programme is also clearly impacting on the work students produce and at my meeting with the students they were extremely positive about this element of the course.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

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.

I received written documentation outlining my role as an external examiner and it provided an appropriate level of information regarding the tasks of an examiner. Staff were also extremely helpful in providing further clarification on various questions I had regarding my 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.

At the beginning of the academic year and at my mid-year visit staff provided me with documentation for all of the modules I was asked to examine. I also noted that the module handbook had been updated to make it more user friendly for students.

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?

I was provided with an appropriate sample of PIC work and the timetable for my final visit was such that I was able to view all the work presented at the final show. However the contextual support materials were overall presented in a fairly disorganised form where there was no clear time line showing how students had progressed their work.

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

The PIC's were of a high standard and it was clear that the research students undertook for their dissertations informed the work they produced for their studio module. The students addressed a broad range of subjects and in general they chose subjects that were of contemporary relevance to the field of fine art.

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 found the administrative arrangements extremely satisfactory. I was able to attend the Board of Examiners and it was also conducted with a high degree of professionalism and I was completely satisfied with the recommendations made by the Board.

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

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies
PROGRAMME: Fine Art [BA]
Modules: ARTF2001, 2040, 3061, 3062, 3080
External Examiner:
University of

On behalf of the Fine Art Team I would like to thank the external examiner, _____ for continued support in the Fine Art Programme. _____ carefully considered observations provide a strong critical framework to assist us in continuing to respond and adapt to ongoing challenging developments in Higher Education. We have responded [below] to the main points highlighted in report.

External Examiner's Report comment:	Programme response:
3. Students produced ambitious work for both their written and exhibition work and it was clear to me that the level of teaching was of a high standard. At the marks meeting staff were clear about how they had arrived at their marks and I consider their methods of marking to be both appropriate and rigorous. However I did note a resistance to going over the mark of 79 and in to the 80s and 90s mark range raising the question of what would a student need to demonstrate to get into this range.	We acknowledge the external's positive comments regarding our assessment process and procedure. We agree that the Fine Art team have difficulty in extending our marking boundaries to fully utilise the top mark range. We will discuss this with the assessment team to identify clear criteria by which a high first is acknowledged. We have, as a School, redefined our marking criteria and this should help us achieve a wider spread of marks.
4. I believe there is a need to improve on the form of the contextual support material that students are required to present. Overall I found the presentation of this material not helpful in terms of my understanding how the student thinks and progress their work. I also think that artist statements should be a mandatory requirement for the assessment process and not optional. There was not an abnormal level of students in the 2:2 category but as student numbers grow it will be a question as how best to support these students and in particular how to get them to engage with the teaching programme.	We will examine the aspect of 'contextual support material' to determine appropriate ways in which to present this to its best advantage. We fully acknowledge the need to adopt methods of presentation that are inclusive and allow the whole cohort to fully engage with the process. We will consider the notion of 'the artist's statement and discuss how this could be extended to embrace a diverse range of textual statements and art writing.
6. I noted developments in the way some students organised their contextual materials in terms of making it clearer how their work evolved over the year however this clarity of presentation of contextual materials was not evident across the whole of the cohort.	We will examine past supporting material to identify examples of good practice that could be used to develop the above strategy.
7. At my mid-year visit students stated that they received a high level of support from the teaching staff. It is evident that staff research interests are reflected in the work students produce and that students are steered towards relevant developments in the field of contemporary art practice. The excellent visiting artist programme is also clearly impacting on the work students produce and at my meeting with the students they were extremely positive about this element of	We acknowledge and thank the external for supportive comments in identifying the importance of a visiting artist programme. We fully endorse this critical aspect of Fine Art pedagogy and as numbers continue to increase will fight to maintain, if not extend, this crucial element to the student experience.

the course.	
Programme Director BA Fine Art	30 August 2016

Kind Regards