

**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:	POLIS
Subject(s):	British Politics
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA Politics BA Politics and Parliamentary Studies BA Economics/Politics BA Geography/Politics
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA (Hons)

**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*

## 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 and the academic standards applied are commensurate for the award of BA (Hons). The programmes I examined are well designed and the standards are appropriate.
- 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 are in line with sector norms and met the expectations of the national subject benchmark.
- 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 for the modules on the degree programmes are appropriate. The marking is consistent across the board and much care has been taken with second marking. A majority of students on the modules I examined attained 2:1s.
- 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.*

I think the broad suite of modules offered by POLIS is creditable. I was surprised at the very small numbers of 1<sup>st</sup> class marks on the five modules I examined in Semester 2. This was not my observation in the academic session 2014/15.
- 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
- 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.*

A number of the British Politics modules clearly emanate from colleagues' research interests and these are very good modules.
- 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

**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

**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 read and authorised drafts examinations and assessments for the modules I was given. The nature and level of the questions was appropriate. Where there were typographical errors (or such like) I flagged this and amendments were made.

**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. Scripts were clearly marked and annotated.

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

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?**

Yes. The Office led by <<>> and supported by <<>> team were excellent. I attended the SCC and the Exam board and both meetings were conducted in a thorough yet expeditious manner. <<>>, the Exams Officer, was meticulous and in full control of processes and procedures. The Board's recommendations were sound.

**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**

Another good year for POLIS adding value and stretching their students. Generous levels of feedback. Professional and efficient administrative practices including the two boards. I would encourage colleagues to use a broader range of marks in the first class category. I examined five modules in semester 2 which comprised 106 students and 10 firsts were awarded.

<<>>

Professor of International Relations  
Head of the School of Politics and International Studies  
University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane,  
Leeds, West Yorkshire,  
LS 28 5PP

27 October 2016

Dear <<>>

I am writing to thank you for your external examiner's report for academic year 2015-16. I have taken over from <<>> as Head of POLIS. He passed on your report, which I have read. It has also been discussed in the School's Committee on Student Education.

We are encouraged by your report. We are particularly pleased that you noted the 'generous levels of feedback', as well as the link between colleagues' research interests and their modules, which you described as 'very good'. We were also reassured by your description of our support team as 'excellent', as well as the confidence you expressed regarding the exam board's procedures and recommendations.

We also note that you would 'encourage colleagues to use a broader range of marks at the first class category', and this has been passed on to tutors.

May I take the opportunity to again thank you for this report and your continuing service as external examiner.

Sincerely

<<>>

cc. pro-Dean for Student Education <<>>; Director of Student Education, <<>>; Head of Quality Assurance, University of Leeds