

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: | Languages, Cultures and Societies |
| Subject(s): | <i>Japanese Studies</i> |
| Programme(s) / Module(s): | Japanese Studies UG Degree Programmes |
| 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

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

- 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 courses that I looked at appropriately targeted learning outcomes and all courses were well structured and contained appropriate content.
- 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.*

All assessment methods appropriate and in general were structured properly. Very occasionally questions could have been more challenging from a critical analytical perspective, rather than being simple requests for description. But I think most if not all of these were resolved prior to the students fulfilling assessments.

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. Academic standards are in general high and appropriate for the level of students at each relevant stage of the degree programmes. Generally I felt that the cohort was a bit stronger this year than previously.

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 exam papers and assessment requirements were of a higher quality this year than previously in terms of their accuracy at the checking and editing stage. Thank you for improving this process.

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.

There is considerable evidence of students being asked to engage in research, particularly at the dissertation stage. The dissertations that I read were original and well researched.

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.

Sufficient. 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.

All documentation necessary was made available in good time. Thank you.

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, and there have been substantive improvements to the quality and accuracy of drafts, as noted above. Thank you for that.

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, there was plenty of student work for me to be able to make a sound assessment.

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

Yes, a broad and interesting range of dissertations was on view, and students showed a marked level of engagement both with the extant literature as well as with opportunities for independent research in the production of an original piece of research.

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, very much so. Substantive improvements have been made to communications between myself and the Leeds team such that the process is more organised and smoother than previously. Thank you.

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

The whole process this year went much more smoothly than in previous years, as communications problems appear to have been ironed out. Thank you for making the job a pleasure to perform!

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

FACULTY OF ARTS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

1 November 2016

Dear

Response to External Examiner's Report, 2015-2016

Many thanks for your Examiner's Report for the academic year 2015-16. Please find below my formal response to the points you have raised in your report.

I am glad that you have found both our Japanese programmes and the assessment procedures deployed in them to be of consistently high standard. I am also delighted with the positive comments you have offered about our dissertation module. As I believe you are aware, this year EAST is piloting the School 'Final Year Project' initiative (which will be rolled out to all students in the School over the next few years), so it is good to know that we are starting this new endeavour from a sound basis.

Thank you also for commending the administrative arrangements relating to your externalling duties. I am pleased that you feel that these have been much smoother this year, and will convey your comments to the administrative staff concerned.

It only remains for me to thank you very much for your input to our programmes and for your very helpful contributions at the exam board. Our programmes will benefit enormously from your comments.

With very best wishes,