

## 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 & societies
Subject(s):	<i>Chinese studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	undergraduate

##### 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*

n/a

## 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 level and nature of the assessment all seems entirely appropriate and suitable to me. Indeed, there were a number of modules, most noticeably EAST2009 Classics of Chinese Literature and Thought; EAST2006 China since 1979; and EAST3102 Chinese language for International Trade and Business, which demonstrated some innovative and interesting methods of assessment.

### 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 programmes are comparable with others offered at other Russell Group universities throughout the UK

### 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.*

In almost all cases, this was appropriate. As I mentioned at the exam board, there was one module – namely EAST2812 (Semester 1), Cantonese for Mandarin Speakers – which bears mentioning here. In this module, 9/16 students gained a first, and in the aural exam, only one student scored below 80. This was raised as an issue at the exam board, and it was agreed that the Department would look into altering assessment or weightings of assessment. The module as it stands appears to be used by some students as a source of easy credits. I note that similar issues were raised regarding this module (or modules like it) last year.

### 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.*

On the whole, this was adequate. There were a small number of modules in which I believed the marking on a whole to have been too harsh. However, these marks were raised at the exam board, and it was agreed that marks should be changed accordingly. This was done (and agreed to by the board)

### 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.*

I note that the feedback provided on UG dissertations is far more extensive this year (this was a point I raised last 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.*

The UG dissertations suggest that many of the best students are capable of undertaking very extensive and high quality research. There is also evidence of a research-led approach to teaching in a number of UG 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

Support from my mentor last year (<<>>) was useful and appropriate.

## 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. All necessary material was provided to me.

**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 – this is an improvement on last year, in that all necessary paperwork was provided to me for all UG modules in 2016 (last year there were one or two modules which were missing the necessary materials when I arrived at Leeds).

**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 provided with exam papers in draft form and I note that suggested changes were all used where appropriate.

**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.

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

In almost all cases, the marking of UG dissertations was appropriate and fair. I did note one dissertation which I believed to have been marked too harshly, but this was raised at the board.

**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 – all satisfactory and dealt with professionally and fairly.

**16. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

Yes. All of these were discussed when necessary at the Exam Board. There was one case in which I believed that an UG dissertation had been marked too harshly, but this mark was raised on my recommendation at the exam board.

## Other comments

**Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form**

Two suggestions which I raised at the exam board:

1. The Department might like to explore how better consistency in the interpretation of the official Marking Criteria might be achieved, as at present, there appears to be a significant difference of opinion in applying these across modules, and indeed within modules when it comes to dissertations.
2. In terms of feedback on mark moderation, there was also a large difference in details according to different individual markers, with some markers providing detailed commentary (which is very useful for providing context to external examiners and indeed module convenors), and others providing the absolute minimum. The Department may wish to look at standardising this, to ensure a minimum standard across all modules.

# School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

FACULTY OF ARTS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

09 January 2017

Dear

Response to External Examiner's Report, 2015-2016

Many thanks for your Examiner's Report for the academic year 2015-2016.

I was happy to note your comments about the appropriateness of aims and ILOs and the comparability of standards here with other Russell Group universities. I am also very happy to pass on your comments about the innovative and interesting methods of assessment in EAST2009, EAST2006 and EAST3102.

I was very pleased to see your comments on the quality of research produced by some of our students in their dissertations and in some UG modules. Equally I was pleased to note that the feedback provided for UG dissertations this year was far more extensive and once again thank you for raising this issue in your last report.

I was pleased to note that, in improvement to previous years, all module paperwork was provided for UG modules this year.

Thank you for your comments on the Cantonese modules. We have passed these onto the module convenor who will discuss this again with the tutor and review the assessments (particularly the listening part) and see whether criteria can be adjusted.

I note your comments on improving consistency in the interpretation of Marking Criteria across modules (and, with dissertations, within the module). We will discuss ways to address this more effectively at section meetings this session.

I also note your comments on the feedback provided by 2<sup>nd</sup> markers and moderators, and the variation in this between modules. Again we will discuss this with colleagues and aim to ensure a minimum standard across modules this year.

It only remains for me to thank you very much for all your very constructive and helpful input to our Chinese Programmes this year. On a personal note, as we now have a new Director of East Asian Studies, I would like to thank you for being a pleasure to work with.

With thanks and very best wishes

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