

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:	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies
Subject(s):	Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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?

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

I have enjoyed being an external examiner for the Middle Eastern and Arabic Studies master programme. I have appreciated the genuine effort put by colleagues in making a difference in the teaching of Middle Eastern, Arabic and Islamic studies at Leeds. I found the programme extremely valuable in terms of essentialising a methodological approach in the contents and teaching of their modules. The intellectual approach based on critical and analytical engagement beyond information dissemination adopted by colleagues should also be commended, which helps students to go beyond the clichés and delve into the underlying philosophical and political economy constructs. The evolution of the modules within the programme and positive responses from the students have been observed over the years with research-led teaching strategy.

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.*

I found the programme and module 'intended learning outcomes' are efficiently appropriate to the award of master in the subject matter; as the delivery of the modules and the quality of delivery is observed to fulfil such outcomes.

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.*

Comparing other programmes in the subject area, I found this programme being successful in terms of developing new generations of subject specific individual with the appropriate intellectual acumen in understanding and discussing middle eastern and Islamic issues. The in-depth knowledge and critical approach beyond clichés put this programme beyond doubt an essential programme in the field.

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.*

Writing essays and dissertation as well as exams as assessment methods adopted in the programme should be considered as appropriate methods of assessments. I have observed the careful attention given by first markers and the second markers in the marking of modules; as well as the extensive comments provided.

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.*

After examining the assignments, exams and dissertations I can conclude without any hesitation that students respond to the effort of the colleagues; and achieved very good marks. This is an indication that students responded to the given opportunities.

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.

The programme has developed over the years in terms of contents and in terms of developing good practice; junior colleagues have developed into successful academics in parting research-led knowledge to their students. I consider this research-led nature of the programme as an essential success for which the colleagues should be commended. The objective of developing critical thinking as part of aims should also be considered as an important quality.

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.

As mentioned above, colleagues have developed a research-led teaching; as their own research seems to have successfully shaped their teaching. In addition, research based teaching approach helped them to make sure that whatever the new research is available should be part of the curriculum.

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

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 found the material regarding external examination process useful and efficient. I have never in a position of requiring additional material.

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.

The material provided was always enough in conducting my duties.

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 consulted for draft exam and assessment papers. As mentioned above, I found questions and topics engaging and critical in nature; and therefore I did not need to provide any substantial comments.

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, I was provided sufficient assessed and examined material available to ensure that the assessment process has been according to the expectations.

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

I have always praised colleagues for helping students to select engaging, analytical, critical and highly intellectual dissertations; I enjoyed going through them. Indeed, the method and standard of assessment was appropriate.

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?

Colleagues working on the administrative side of the process have been highly efficient in their communication and making sure that I receive all the material that I need. Their efficiency and commitment should be commended too.

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

Indeed, such considerations were also brought to the exam board with the necessary supporting documentation.

Other comments

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

It has been an enjoyable experience for me; I have full trust that the programme will develop further and will further expand; I believe that colleagues are doing excellent work in providing a critical and in-depth understanding of middle eastern and Islamic studies subjects to their students through their research-led and research-based teaching strategies. Congratulations to all.

Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

21 December 2016

Dear

I am writing to formally thank you for externally examining our MA Programme in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. We are pleased to read that no concerns were raised by you about the examination process, the assessment methods used and the grades given and thank you for rating our subject area so highly for its dedicated and skilled staff, the quality of the programme we offer and the overall academic standard of our students. We noted with particular delight your special praise of the research-led nature of the programme, which you described as being 'an essential success for which colleagues should be commended'. As you rightly observe, this was reflected in the high quality of the dissertations written by our students. Indeed, over the past academic year we worked hard to improve our overall module offerings and enhance the coherence of the programmes on our books.

At the end of your term as MAMEIS external examiner, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your dedication to the role in the last few years and the great support you extended to staff members teaching on the programme.

Thank you again for your report, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you like to add anything further regarding the programme.

With best wishes,

Director of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
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