

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 Languages, Cultures and Societies – Centre for Translation Studies
Subject(s):	<i>MODL5042M Interpreting Skills: Spanish</i> <i>MODL5716M Simultaneous Interpreting: Spanish</i> <i>MODL5766M Consecutive and Bilateral Interpreting: Spanish</i> <i>MODL5119M Specialised Spanish-English Translation A</i> <i>MODL5129M Specialised Spanish-English Translation B</i> <i>MODL5302M Extended Translations (Spanish)</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MACITS, MATSI, MAATS
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

There are no areas of urgent attention

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?

*Yes, I was provided with a copy of the previous relevant External Examiners' report. This was very helpful.
 I do not recall having received 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

It is my first year of appointment.

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.*

In my opinion, the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes for both the translation and the interpreting programmes are in consonance with the level of the awards under consideration. The Aims and Learning Outcomes are clearly phrased and reflect accurately the demands and expectations of the translation and interpreting markets as well as the level required for a recently-qualified translator or interpreter.

I have been impressed with the range and content of modules offered in the programme and which I have scrutinised. The core modules cover the main skills and knowledge required by junior translators and interpreters and are complemented by a wide variety of option modules aiming to develop students' expertise and hone more specific and specialised skills.

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.*

Based on my experience working for several universities which offer similar programmes, I believe both the Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes for the modules I have scrutinised are in line with those in peer institutions and national benchmarks.

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 design and structure of the assessment methods are appropriate to measure the ILOs.

I was impressed by the assessment criteria grid for all the modules under scrutiny. I particularly praise: 1) that each assessment criteria is broken down in bullet points highlighting the aspects included in each criteria and 2) that each band (i.e. very good, good, pass, poor, very poor) also has a description depending on each specific criteria. This increases the transparency of the marking process and is a valuable and effective instrument for tutors to be able to award an accurate final mark. The grids are also very helpful for students; they can clearly see the areas of improvement for each criterion.

The marks were consistent across the whole cohort in each module and the feedback provided by the markers was generally detailed and constructive, so I was happy to see that. Students' overall performance was satisfactory, with some students achieving excellent marks, which is an indication of the quality of the teaching and of students achieving of the ILOs.

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, students were given the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs. The topics covered by both the translation and interpreting tasks were relevant and very current. The level of difficulty reflected the ILOs and the assessment instruments and tasks used were appropriated to measure achievement of the Aims and ILOs for each module that I scrutinised.

Students' performance was satisfactory and was in line with those of students on similar courses in other institutions. The cohort included students of various abilities, with some students achieving excellent marks, and a few others obtaining a bare passed. Very few students failed the modules that I scrutinised, and most students passed the modules comfortably. Those students who failed were provided the opportunity to do a resit and most of them passed the exam/piece of assessment in question.

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.

It is my first year of appointment.

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.

My main area of research is translation pedagogy and, based on my own research, I would say the curriculum design is in line with the current research on this area.

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

I am not involved in PhD programme.

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.

The material I was provided with was sufficient for me to act effectively as an External Examiner. Since the very beginning, I have been very well informed by the whole team on the modules and marks for scrutiny. I have always received very detailed documentation and information for every module that I have examined. All the team members I have been in touch with have been very helpful and have always answered my queries in a very prompt manner. In the vast majority of cases, the materials have been given to me well in advanced and they were very complete and contained clear instructions on how to proceed. In the case of the Extended Translations, I was provided with a very comprehensive and representative sample, as well as the marking criteria. While a good number of the Extended Translations had comments from both markers, some of samples which were provided in electronic format only contained the feedback sheet but no in-text comments. This made the scrutinising process slightly more difficult and time consuming for me. However, my queries were answered swiftly and the team offered to send these pieces in hard copy by post so that I could have a look at the marker's notes and on the actual scripts. I was assured that next year fully marked projects will be sent to me either in hard copy or electronically.

The video recordings of student's performance were particularly good since it gave me the opportunity to see student's body language during their performance, which is key for interpreting. In fact, some of the comments made by markers were related to body language, therefore it was very helpful to be able to see that in the video (rather than just an audio recording). However, accessing the server was not always very easy. Sometimes the video recordings kept stopping and buffering to the point that sometimes I had to play the video 10-15 times, which was quite frustrating and time consuming at my end. I do not know if it was my Internet connection or the server, but this happened with all the videos that I played in April. This being said, the video for the August resit I scrutinised in October worked fine.

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.

As indicated in section 10, I have always been very well informed by the whole team and have received appropriate documentation for the modules under scrutiny. For each module, I have been provided with the marking criteria, the corresponding ST or recordings plus students' work and instructions about the specific sample. For the future, it would be helpful to receive a module overview or module report when the material and marks are sent to me for scrutiny. I am aware that the information about each module is available online, but it would be very helpful to also have this information sent in a Word document together with the rest of the materials.

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?

I was provided with the final version of the papers for both translation and interpreting modules when all relevant materials were sent to me for scrutiny. For the interpreting modules, speeches are delivered "live" and, therefore I was provided with the recordings at the same time as I received the rest of the material.

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 received a good range of samples which were sufficient and representative to evaluate students' work and performance with confidence. Scripts were clearly marked and the feedback provided by the markers was generally detailed. The feedback provided was always constructive and highlighted in a positive way some areas for improvement for future assignments.

I believe that online marking would be useful for consideration, since annotations in scripts would be clearer and more easily available for students.

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

N/A

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 the administrative arrangements were satisfactory for the whole process. I was able to attend the Board and was satisfied with the recommendations made by the Chair.

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 topics for all interpreting modules were topical and challenging and the marking was transparent and fair across the whole cohort. The feedback provided was detailed and constructive - I particularly liked the way the feedback was provided, with one column in the Excel sheet focusing on "Keep doing" and another column focusing on "Work on". I think this is a positive and encouraging way to provide feedback and it also clearly point out areas for improvement from student's perspective.

As for the translation modules, the topics for both the take-home test and the timed translation were relevant and the level of difficulty was appropriate. The range of marks obtained by students showed good performances overall, some of them particularly good, with some students achieving a mark in the mid-70s and 80 for one individual piece of assessment, which reflects not only students' capabilities but also the quality of teaching. In my opinion, marks were consistent and fair within the whole cohort. Perhaps some marks in the low 60s and high 50s were slightly generous based on the marking criteria. In any case, all marks were consistent across the whole cohort and the feedback clearly highlighted the strengths and the areas for improvement.

As for the Extended Translation, I had a look at both resits from the previous academic year and also a very representative sample of the 2015/2016 cohort. I was particularly impressed by the feedback provided for some of the into English translations. The detailed breakdown of illustrative examples of problems is really helpful from students' perspective. This type of structure and breakdown in terms of feedback should be considered as a model of good practice for all language combinations. I was also very impressed by the feedback sheet, particularly the comprehensive breakdown of each criterion taken into account, which makes the marking process more transparent and provides students with a very clear overview of their performance in terms of every aspect. Perhaps the categories at the top (i.e. Very good, good, weak, very week) should also include the specific % range (+70%, 60-69%, etc.).

While the marking criteria were followed by the markers and comprehensive and constructive feedback was provided to students in most cases, in some cases there were no comments from the second-marker. It was evident that all projects were second-marked, since the name of the markers were provided on the template. However, I suggest all feedback templates include some feedback from both makers (even if it is only a short sentence) to make the marking process more transparent.

As for the commentary, I believe 1600 words does not leave much space for critical reflection, perhaps increasing the word count to 2000 words would allow for more detailed reflections on the part of the students.

13 January 2017

Dear <<>>,</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 187 870 220" data-label="Text">
<p>Many thanks for your report on our postgraduate modules in translation and interpreting involving Spanish for 2015-16.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 230 885 281" data-label="Text">
<p>I am glad that you found the design and structure of our assessments, as well as our arrangements for marking, to be appropriate. I am delighted by your comments on the range of modules, details of assessment criteria, quality of feedback and the high standard of achievement by our students.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 291 862 325" data-label="Text">
<p>I took note of your suggestion to complement the module information available online by sending you a word document together with the remaining materials.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 335 884 386" data-label="Text">
<p>I would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to supporting the quality of our programmes and their assessment. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me directly, should you seek clarification at any point.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 423 261 439" data-label="Text">
<p>With kind regards,</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 478 161 491" data-label="Text">
<p><<>></p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 503 368 519" data-label="Text">
<p>Exams Tutor, Translation Studies</p></div>
<div data-bbox="115 520 161 533" data-label="Text">
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