

**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
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

**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*

There are no matters for 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?*

No.

**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.*

In this, my first year as External Examiner, I found that Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes were very well stated in all documentation, and that they were met throughout the programme. Modules are carefully devised in order to meet the aims and objectives at every stage.

It is my view that standards are appropriate for the award. This is also true of all the modules I scrutinised.

### 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.*

There seems to have been a lot of work done at Leeds to ensure that national subject benchmark expectations are met. This is clear in the attention to details of progression and to learning objectives in individual modules throughout the programme.

### 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 are appropriate throughout the programme. While there is the expected emphasis on essay writing and written exam, there is also a variety of forms of assessment within that, for example, posters. The assessment seems to be carefully structured to ensure development of key skills, and to provide a strong sense of progression.

From what I saw in this year, the teaching is of a very high standard. Materials provided to students on modules are excellent, and the lecturers provide a very strong framework for learning. The modules that I saw showed excellent levels of organisation, and students responded well, with some very high standards of writing. All of this would suggest that the teaching is of a high standard throughout the degree.

### 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 have ample opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and learning objectives. The strengths of the students as a cohort lie in the quality of work of the most independent thinkers, who are obviously encouraged to develop their work. The weaknesses, as would be expected, lie in the managing of scholarly apparatus, especially in the lower levels, but this improves by final year..

### 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.*

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.*

It is clear to me from this year that the programme is built on the research strengths of the academic staff. This means that there is a broad curriculum covering a lot of the Iberian world. It is to be noted that the programme shapes the research-led teaching very well in order to manage student progression and to provide a very strong foundation in the discipline. Students undertake research at final year level when they do a dissertation and there were some examples of really first class research at this stage.

### 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

#### 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.*

Throughout the year I received all paperwork in a timely and helpful fashion. All the information received was helpful and allowed me to fulfil my duties effectively.

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.*

Again, I received all documentation in a timely fashion, and it was all fundamental to understanding the programme and fulfilling my duties effectively.

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 received all draft examination papers and was given ample time to note any queries. All questions were appropriate at all levels. In any case, there were clear mechanisms in place for comment and the members of staff were very willing to hear them and respond.

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?

I attended for two days before the meeting. All scripts were available, they were clearly marked and any specific cases for attention were highlighted. It all worked very smoothly indeed.

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

The dissertations I saw had obviously been very carefully supervised and students were obviously encouraged to use their research skills to develop their work. The assessment was excellent, comments meticulous and a clear dialogue with the second marker was in evidence in all cases.

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?

All administrative arrangements were excellent throughout. The Board of Examiners was very well managed indeed.

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

**School of Languages, Cultures and Societies**  
**Spanish, Portuguese and**  
**Latin American Studies**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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28 November 2016

Dear

Now that all External Examiners' reports have been internally processed, I would like to respond to both the general comments from all Externals and the specific recommendations which you made in your report in relation to the academic session 2014/2015.

I would first like to thank all Externals for the positive comments about the overall quality of the subject area's work, the diversity of modules we offer supported by a strong research culture, the high level of student achievement and the variety and rigour of the assessment procedures, as well as the efficiency of the marking, feedback and exams administration. In return I would also like to thank all Externals for their hard work and kind support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Marks Meeting. SPLAS at Leeds also thanks you for your collaboration and dedication as an External Examiner during the last academic year.

We feel very pleased to see that you regard our teaching and assessment methods as being of a high standard. Your comments on the way in which our research-led teaching promotes student's progression and helps monitor it are also welcome. This year we will continue to send all relevant materials to you as promptly as possible so you can discharge your duties as External Examiner as well and as productively as you did last year.

Finally, thank you once again for your work last year. We have all very much benefited from your comments and professionalism.

Yours sincerely,

Exams Officer  
Lecturer in Spanish History  
University of Leeds  
Leeds LS1 4JT

**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/ Language Centre
Subject(s):	Spanish Language Modules
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Spanish electives

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**

**Completed report**

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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*

N/A

**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 given all the information in advance of my arrival. I was also given contextual information on the programme.

**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.*

I found the Aims and ILOs, as well as the structure and content of the programmes, to be appropriate. The standards were also applied appropriately.

**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.*

Students are aware of what is required of them and are taught intensively and assessed in such a way that their progress is constantly monitored. Information for each module is very clear. Guidance on the expectations and available resources is provided. The inclusion of a recommended bibliography for almost every course was, in my view, a good way to give students the tools to deepen their knowledge of the subject.

**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.*

As a new examiner to the University of Leeds, I am most impressed by the variety of options in the programme and by the rigour with which Spanish is taught and assessed in the modules that I have evaluated. In the very design of the exams one can see that there is an intention to go beyond simply testing students on their command of the language, as exams give them the opportunity to apply all that they have learnt during their studies. The use of real and authentic materials was a very good way to set the tone for many of the exams that I have seen. The use of realia by exam setters is to be praised as it provides students an opportunity to test their language according to real-life situations.

**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 adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement and this can be seen in the wide range of marks awarded in the programme.

**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.*

I was very impressed with how the faculty's research has been incorporated into the curriculum. I would encourage members of the department to apply for a major grant on language teaching because, in my view, they have the experience required to successfully obtain funding from external bodies.

**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

**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, I received the External Examiner Handbook which provided clear guidance. I also appreciated being assigned a mentor, who has given me helpful guidance in my first year as an External Examiner. I am very grateful to her for her time and I think that this mentoring system should be maintained in the future. I would be happy to act as a mentor for other external examiners in the future.

**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, I received sufficient information in advance and I was given relevant information on each course assessed.

**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 these materials. The questions were very appropriate. Indeed, I was impressed by how the assessment materials were designed to replicate real-life language situations. In some cases, they included images and other features. It is clear that lecturers spend a tremendous amount of time on the design of these materials.

**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 given a lot of information on the assessment and a detailed record of markers' notes on individual students' performance. I met with almost all the lecturers individually and had an opportunity to learn more about each course. The organisation of the Board of Examiners was exemplary. The meeting went very smoothly and was very efficient overall.

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

There was only one extended essay on an interesting subject related to discourse analysis. 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?**

Yes, I was able to attend the meeting. The administrative arrangements of the Board were excellent. I was satisfied with the recommendations of the board.

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

There was a previous meeting in which the mitigating circumstances and medical evidence were dealt with. Some of the cases were mentioned during the Board meeting and consulted with the external examiners if needed. In addition, I had informal conversations with colleagues to discuss some of these cases. One specific case was discussed further in a follow-up email after my visit to Leeds and a consensus decision was made by the lecturers, the Senior Examiner and myself as External Examiner.

**Other comments**

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

There is no doubt that this is an innovative programme for the teaching of Spanish with an array of modules that whet the appetite of any 21st century learner. During the brief oral report that I gave at the Board of examiners I had a chance to congratulate colleagues at Leeds for their professionalism, while making some minor suggestions for the language programme based on the materials that I had seen. My first recommendation would be to incorporate instances of idiomatic language into exams. This type of language, while being present in everyday communication, is often not taught or assessed but is an important component of how native speakers talk and interact, certainly in Hispanic cultures.

Also, Spanish is a language characterised by its linguistic diversity. It is the second most widely-spoken native tongue in the world and an official language in 21 countries. Unlike many other major languages, it does not possess a variety that is used as the language of prestige. The importance of linguistic diversity in Spanish is reflected in the creation of a new international proficiency test, SIELE, which will take into account different geographic varieties of the language in a single exam and will be launched jointly by the Universidad de Salamanca (Spain) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico) in September 2016.

Hence my second recommendation would be a more salient integration of the different varieties of the language in some of the advanced modules. Perhaps the creation in the near future of a module devoted to exploring the different varieties of the Spanish-speaking world could be an asset to the language programme. For instance, having this component in the second year, it would prepare students before they go on their year abroad, especially, those who have not been exposed to Latin American varieties, because of the geographical distance, while also making the most of their experience. In the final year, it would also help students appreciate the connection between the language and the literature and if a module is devoted to this topic from a linguistic perspective, students could apply their experience during the year abroad further investigating the variety of Spanish with which they have been in contact. As already mentioned, these are only some minor suggestions based on the direction taken by some institutions in connection with the teaching of Spanish.



**School of Languages, Cultures and Societies**  
**Spanish, Portuguese and**  
**Latin American Studies**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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17 January 2017

Dear

Now that all External Examiners' reports have been internally processed, I would like to respond to both the general comments from all Externals and the specific recommendations which you made in your report in relation to the academic session 2015-2016.

I would first like to thank all Externals for the encouraging comments about the overall quality of the subject area's work, the diversity of modules we offer supported by a strong research culture, the high level of student achievement and the variety and rigour of the assessment procedures, as well as the efficiency of the marking, feedback and exams administration. In return I would also like to thank all Externals for their work and support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Exams Board.

Our unit was very satisfied with your work during the whole year, in the Marks Meeting and with the report you submitted earlier this year. We are delighted to read your praise on our language teaching methods and the rigour displayed. We are also pleased to see the potential benefits of using real-life texts and images in exams to test student's actual levels of language acquisition and usage, and thus enhance their employability skills. We find equally gratifying your positive comments on our varied teaching methods and we are very pleased that you find our programme innovative and well designed.

Your positive comments about the departmental work and, in particular, the Spanish-language teaching section have already been passed on to colleagues. They are working on devising ways to incorporate the use of idiomatic expressions in the Final Year exam. Due consideration is also being given to your insightful suggestion regarding the creation of language modules on the different varieties of spoken Spanish to support our students who spend their Year Abroad in Latin America. Thanks for both recommendations, they are highly appreciated and we are taking them on board.

Finally, I should like to thank you once again for your generosity, hard work, professionalism and support over the course of the last years and look forward to maintaining our successful collaboration with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

SPLAS Exams Officer  
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University of Leeds  
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