

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:	Faculty of Arts/School of Modern Languages
Subject(s):	<i>Spanish</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	SPPO 1045; SPPO 1060; SPPO 2650, SPPO 2651 SPPO 2680, SPPO 2681, SPPO 2690; SPPO 2691; SPPO 3050; SPPO 3070; SPPO 3094; SPPO 3240, SPPO 3540; SPPO 3590
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**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.*

As I stressed in previous reports (2013/14 and 2014/15), the breadth and range of the undergraduate programme is really outstanding. There is abundant evidence of research-led teaching, extremely original modules and high levels of students' attainment. The standards applied are clearly appropriate and fair.

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 quality of the programme taught in Leeds is entirely in keeping with the practice at other similar departments teaching Hispanic studies. If anything, the overall degree places Leeds at the very top of departments in the Russell Group.

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.*

I am completely satisfied that the design and structure of assessment was fair and accurate. The marks returned reflected well the candidates' performance. I would like to stress the quality and the vibrant exchanges between the first and second markers of the modules. As I already mentioned in the preliminary board, the wide-ranging nature as well as the scope of the modules taught are admirable. It became apparent during the course of my scrutiny of essays/scripts the impressive quality of a significant percentage of students indicating the sophistication and depth of the teaching. Finally, the teaching methodology progression merits special recognition. In this context, I would like to congratulate the department for introducing the student to such variety of relevant skill acquisition in the year 1 module SPPO 1060.

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.*

As I mentioned before, overall student performance was consistent with other UK institutions, and shows the high standards of teaching at Leeds.

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.

As I mentioned above, the methodological progression from year 1 is admirable. Modules are based on research expertise.

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 discussed previously, there is across the degree a straight link between research expertise and teaching in most modules with the obvious benefit to students. The overall degree is made up of an impressive range and originality of subjects: history, literature, gender studies, politics, etc.

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.

The provision of information was well-timed and very helpful for my task of external examiner. I would like to thank both <<>> (in an informal role this year) and <<>> replacement <<>> for their tireless efforts to make the life of us, the externals, a very pleasant experience.

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

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. The nature and levels of the questions were 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?

Dissertation subjects were appropriate as well as method and standard of assessment. I had to raise for second year in a row one of the dissertations. I would recommend examiners to be more generous (especially since I was informed that use of Spanish does not count for the final mark) with the impressive work of some students.

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 to all the questions. Nevertheless, it is odd that externals are not supposed to attend or have a say in classification boards.

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

During my preliminary report to the board, I already made some suggestions in order to facilitate the actual supervision and agenda of the external examiners in Leeds. IN particular, it would be helpful to provide samples of work per module rather than face the external with the awesome look of piles of essays and scripts. Having said that, I am delighted to conclude for third time that the quality of the degree in Hispanic Studies in Leeds rates amongst the best institutions in the country.

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



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

10 February 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 Examiners 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 you for your hard work and kind support both during the year (approving draft exam papers) and during the day of moderation in Leeds before the Exams Board.

As requested in your report, I will ask SPLAS members of staff to choose a selection of the assignments that more urgently need your moderation in the summer Marks Meeting this academic year. As internal markers, we will also take on board the necessity of being slightly more generous with our marks in the First Class band, with reference to our established marking criteria, so that strong students' work and achievements are duly acknowledged.

Regarding your comment about externals' attendance at Classification Boards: our policy is detailed in the LCS External Examiner Information Pack which was sent to you at the beginning of the session. All undergraduate students on both Single and Joint Honours programmes within LCS are classified at one Board of Examiners (Classification Board) held over two days the week following the module marks meetings in June. Each year two External Examiners are invited to return to Leeds to attend this board. The purpose of External Examiners at this board is to observe and ratify our procedures for processing and approving degree classifications and to sign the degree classification sheets for all programmes. We invite External Examiners on a rotational basis and aim to ensure that each of our externals for undergraduate programmes has the opportunity to attend the Classification Board once during their four-year tenure.

Your positive comments about the work of SPLAS and, in particular, the Spanish section have already been passed on to colleagues.

Finally, I should like to thank you once again for your work and support over the year, and look forward to continuing to collaborate so productively with you this academic year.

Yours sincerely,

SPLAS Exams Officer
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