

**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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Dear External Examiners,

Thank you all for submitting your respective reports on the MA programmes in the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science for the academic year 2014-15. We are, as ever, extremely grateful for your dedicated work and we take your comments very seriously.

Following our new practice of producing single inclusive responses to external examiner reports on our BA programmes, we hereby send you this single response to all of your reports so that both you and we retain a clear overview of all issues arising. Although this inevitably makes our response to your valued reports a little less personal, we hope that you find it to be a helpful approach overall.

Regarding the Theology and Religious Studies programmes, we are pleased to hear (from ◇) that these are equipping students with the necessary methodological skills for dealing with the research requirements at MA level, and that our processes for providing feedback to students are working well. We do very much regret both that ◇ receipt of the coursework to be examined was delayed and that the quantity of it exceeded the anticipated amount. As acknowledged in ◇ report, the delay was in part a consequence of staff illness, but we shall endeavour to ensure that estimates of the quantity of coursework to be expected are more accurate in future. Moreover, in response to ◇ concerns, once the marking for each semester is complete we will henceforth send out the scripts to external examiners in two discrete batches to ensure that the load is more manageable.

With regard to our Philosophy programme, we are pleased that ◇ noted the influence of staff research on MA teaching - a virtue enhanced by our team-taught Analytic Philosophy modules, which ran for the first time this past year. We also note ◇ concerns that 3 hours of supervision may be insufficient contact time for the Independent Study module. After deliberation about this point at the exam board meeting, those present concluded that increasing the number of contact hours would be impractical (for staff workload reasons), and in tension with the pedagogical aims of the module, i.e., acquiring the capacity to independently formulate and implement a research project. However, in light of ◇ concerns, in future the Philosophy MA director will emphasise such module aims to the students at the beginning of the programme, and direct them towards another module choice if they do not yet feel ready to undertake a research project independently.

Finally, with regard to our HPS programmes: although these did not run last year, we wish to thank <> for <> comments on the dissertation marking for the part-time student completing the Philosophy of Science MA.

If you have any further comments, or if you feel that any of your original comments have not been adequately addressed above, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

<> (Head of School)