

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:	Performance and Cultural Industries
Subject(s):	Theatre and Performance
Programme(s) / Module(s):	PECI 3700 Independent Research Project PECI 3106 Performance project PECI 2706 Cultural Flashpoints PECI 12705 Theatre Directing PECI 12102 Collaborative Performance Project PECI 2710 Industry Study PECI 2101 Strategies for Research
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

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?

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.*

The programme continues to achieve high standards of teaching and learning with the best students achieving standards that surpass UG standards. The modules are distinctive, ambitious, research led and engaging for students. The programme was operating a revised structure this year with the stage 3 performance project being introduced at stage 1. This was reportedly highly successful and a credit to the staff who managed an intensive programme of practical work across the curriculum whilst operating with a reduced team (due to staff absences for research and medical leave). I was impressed by the ways in which students interacted with historical material to produce original insights and conceptually sophisticated writing in Cultural Flashpoints and the Performance Project. This was not evident in the newly introduced Directing module, however, where students would benefit from engaging with the production histories in which their work is situated and where the curriculum needs to broaden students' knowledge of contemporary theatre directors. Whilst the programme as a whole is carefully structured to ensure progression, students may need to be encouraged to do the joined up thinking that will create connections between modules. The Independent Research Project, for example demonstrate impressive breadth and scope in terms of topics, but students might produce more focussed and in depth studies if they pursued areas of interest introduced at stage 2 so that they are starting from a more advanced position. They might also productively build on Strategies for Research, using the literature review as a foundation for the IRP research. This is a common issue arising from modular structures responsive to student choice. Students need to be encouraged to develop agency as learners, scaffolding the knowledge they acquire as they move through the programme

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 learning outcomes of the revised programme and new modules are consistent with and reflective of the revised benchmark statement for Drama, Dance and Performing Arts. The programme compares favourably with Drama and theatre studies programmes at similar institutions. There are excellent opportunities for learning through placements (employability) and through project work in social and community settings, identified as important features in the revised benchmarking statement. What is particularly impressive about the Leeds curriculum is its coverage of drama, dance and performing arts with students engaging with film and television, contemporary dance and popular music as well as the staple diet of theatre and performance histories, criticism and practices. Leeds students also benefit from the strong scenographic expertise of the staff team which ensures they engage holistically with attention to the visual and auditory aspects of performance environments in their theatre making (and writing).

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.*

There continues to be a very good range of teaching, learning and assessment methods. There is evidence of the full marking range being used, although there is some clustering of marks across modules in the 62 to 75 range. Students continue to perform better in practical work than in written, but the gap is narrowing and this is particularly evident in work at the top of the range (e.g. Performance Project with 13 First Class marks for practice and 8 for essays). I was provided with evidence of moderating processes this year (as requested) and I was impressed by the rigour and detail. I referred to plagiarism procedures in last year's report and noted a much higher level of referrals arising from a programme of staff development and a policy of early intervention in academic malpractice so that students are identified at the earliest opportunity and given targeted support to ensure they understand and comply with academic referencing conventions. This is now excellent practice. Leeds is commendable in retaining continuous assessment in spite of the burden on staff to support and evidence process based marking. Given the volume of practical work across the programme this year as a consequence of the curriculum being in transition, this is particularly commendable. It was evident that staff were carrying higher supervision and marking loads for the Individual Research Project this year due to staffing resources. This led to some changes in second marking and moderating procedures which, however, continue to be rigorous. I was concerned about the increased workload for staff but understand that this is being addressed for next year. There is still a need for consistency in the presentation of examiners packs. The majority are in very good order, sent (or made available) in good time with module guidelines, the full run of marks and issues identified for the attention of the external. For practical work, however, documentation needs to be more clearly presented so that examiners can easily identify productions and students. This material needs to be made available in advance as it is time consuming to review.

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.*

Academic standards are very good and consistent with comparable programmes in the UK. Indeed, I consider Leeds to be extremely rigorous and fair in their adherence to criteria. There appeared to be a higher prevalence of marks in the 2.2 range across levels 2 and 3 this year, but the marking was verified as appropriate. In some institutions, practical group work marks can contribute to grade inflation and I was impressed by the strategies developed to prevent this with students continuing to be marked individually and these marks being clearly differentiated from the group performance. I was still aware of the prevalence of borderline marks and would encourage staff to avoid these where possible and to determine whether the work is in the higher or lower category as this will generate a clearer profile at the end of the programme. As indicated above, students would benefit from transferring learning across modules and it would be useful to consider strategies to develop this. Some staff have invited 3rd year students to brief 2nd year students on their experience of particular modules. As I suggested last year, it would be useful to sample a cross section of work from individual students to get a sense of how they perform across different modules and to have insight into the student assessment experience.

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 was evident from the first year examination board that the new curriculum and the introduction of the practical project at stage one had been extremely successful in terms of creating group cohesion and in student performance with some outstanding profiles across practical and written components.

Good practice is evident in the structures developed for supporting staff and students in plagiarism awareness and prevention.

Continuous assessment procedures to support and evidence process marking is also distinctive and commendable with staff using a variety of strategies to monitor project development.

The introduction of Directing to the programme needs to be monitored and reviewed for next year to ensure that this doesn't become too resource intensive and that standards are maintained. This will be popular with students and care needs to be taken that the teaching and delivery is appropriate to the changing context of contemporary theatre practice. Students would benefit from access to the production work of current directors (e.g. seeing and reviewing productions) and need to develop research skills, demonstrating familiarity with the production histories of the texts they are working with. The documentation for this module needs to be presented in ways that enable examiners to easily and swiftly identify productions and students. On the basis of the material I saw, the text based work (practical and written) wasn't as strong as other areas of practice in the curriculum and this is an area where the relationship between practical and written work needs to be clearly articulated and where we might expect to find strong synergies.

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.

The curriculum is very clearly informed by staff research interests, particularly in terms of scenography, popular performance and cultural history, devised and physical theatre, applied theatre, audience engagement and performance and digital media. Students are clearly inspired and engaged by staff teaching to their research specialisms and this generates outstanding work from the more capable students. This is evident in dissertation work, practice based research informing the performance project, the research processes associated with the collaborative project and the very distinctive Cultural Flashpoints module which is particularly impressive in the originality of work produced and the capabilities of students as independent thinkers. Research strategies is an extremely important module within the curriculum design and it is to be hoped that this can be developed next year to ensure that students make progress from formative to summative assessment and build on this knowledge at stage 3.

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

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.

I was given access to a range of material through the VLE and it was helpful to have been sent some material in advance. There is a need to address documentation for practical work as referred to above. If students have produced programme notes or supplementary documentation it would be helpful to see this as well. There needs to be consistency across modules in the organisation of practice based materials for external examiners. It is not possible to review extensive amounts of practical work in the time spent with course materials on the day before the exam boards. This needs to be made available to the examiner in advance as a sample in the same way as written work.

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.

Module handbooks were supplied and were generally in good order. Documentation of marking and moderating procedures was extremely detailed and helpful. As the programme is in transition, it would be helpful to have an overview of some kind (e.g. programme map) so that we can see where modules are situated in the new or previous programme, what is new or under revision etc.

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?

n/a

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 was provided with comprehensive samples of work, covering the full range and student work had been very clearly annotated

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

The board was conducted with professionalism and efficiency. I fully endorse the recommendations.

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

Yes. This was attended to diligently.

Other comments

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

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 Performance and Cultural Industries
Subject(s):	Theatre and Performance
Programme(s) / Module(s):	PECI 2501, 2503, 2506, 2507, 2708, 3501, 9001
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Completed report

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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 for urgent attention this year.

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

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.*

There were no significant changes to the ILOs this year and so I can only repeat my comment from last year that these remain at an appropriate level for the programme levels examined. They are entirely in line with other similar institutions with which I am familiar. The programme is currently undergoing structural changes but I will not be overseeing these since I am coming to the end of my term of external examining. The more recent examiner will oversee their introduction as they filter into the second year next academic year.

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.*

As above, the current courses at 2nd and 3rd year level are the same as last year and I therefore reiterate the same comments. The courses are commensurate with similar courses in other comparable institutions with which I am familiar. The Aims and ILOs are clearly stated in student handbooks and these map the national subject benchmark recommendations with clear indication of expected level and progression.

Consistent use of the VLE to outline the course aims, content and assessment modes/criteria provide an excellent base of communication with students. Assessment points and criteria are carefully linked to the aims for the course although, as expected in a theatre course, the modes of assessment for meeting these aims are diverse.

Each of the courses I looked at offered a good range of supporting bibliographies broken down into weekly segments and with both class readings and extensions for later essay research. As last year I also appreciated the supportive way that staff work with students on practical assignments through allocation of dedicated space for independent work and close monitoring of the group process.

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.*

Without exception the feedback I saw for both written and practical courses was detailed and full. The online marking that has now been adopted across modules offered another layer of commentary that looked useful for student development and was being used consistently. As I have noted before, there is a strong culture evident here of tutors engaging with students' thinking and practice rather than merely evaluating assessments.

This year there were fewer borderline marks being used and the full range of marks was employed although there did not seem to be so many high first class marks being awarded. I could not see any problem with this. It just reflected the work presented. My only concern here was that in one module the essay marks rewarded excelling students but the presentation marks seemed to be bunched around a low 2.1. (Modernism and Postmodernism). The presentations in both this module and in Performer Training revealed some lack of confidence in students. They did not make best use of the performative possibilities offered by group presentation. Although when raised in the staff group discussion tutors suggested teaching on presentation skills is covered in the first year, I suggest that a very short 'formative' assessment prior to the presentations might raise the ambition and confidence of students in this form of assessment.

Last year I raised the issue of tracking 1st and 2nd markers interchanges prior to agreeing a mark and I received evidence of this in email exchanges that provided a paper trail. This could become more systemised to ensure the same process is used across all modules. Clearly this is most helpful for EEs and if any student complaints about marks are received.

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.*

From the work viewed it was clear that students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs. On most courses the marks followed the usual span to be expected on similar courses with which I am familiar and where one seminar group I noted seemed to achieve at a lower level the staff were able to explain why this had happened. I was not querying marks it should be noted but just asking about a pattern of marks.

As noted above I had a minor query about the support for students giving presentations.

Unusually this year I was asked to look at a set of presentations in POP 5 in response to issues raised by students concerning their marks. In my view, all four groups were marked fairly, given the final outcome that I viewed on DVD of all groups. The feedback forms were clearly written and explained concisely why the mark had been allocated. In most cases this was due to the descriptive tone taken in the presentation on projects rather than a more analytical

approach. The performance on terrorism 'Are you a terrorist?' was strong in parts but had gaps where work was either elongated and wore thin or was ill thought through.

The three applied theatre projects B2, 3 and 4. showed student commitment and enthusiasm but the work remained at a somewhat basic level. In part this was through a failure to analyse project ideas sufficiently but it also seemed that there was insufficient literature searching undertaken to support and develop initial ideas. The groups would have benefited from more reference to case studies that could offer models of practice and enable them to aim for more precisely targeted workshop interventions.

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 noted above (3) the notes on 1st and 2nd marking moderation discussions were recorded more clearly.

I noted last year that there was some inconsistency between marks awarded and comments given in feedback. Of the work considered this year I did not see any similar discrepancy.

There were many examples of good practice, for instance in the manner that students are encouraged in POP 3 and 4 to use a range of media in their practical projects. I could see the progression of this through the POP modules, such that in the course on New Writing for example, students are confidently integrating performance, film, moveable props etc. along with developing their co-written scripts. In 'Performer Training' it was clear that the presentation brief was designed to support the larger essay assignment and the resulting work was of a very good standard. Tutors continue to direct students to performance practices outside the institution whether through shows or working in a range of different community settings. This enriches student experience and helps them to bridge university research and professional life.

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.

On the whole it is apparent that staff are able to teach to their research strengths and expertise. This is of great benefit to the students who learn within an active research environment that is up to date and of an excellent standard. This is evidenced both in the course content and structure but also in the very detailed feedback comments for student assessments. The suggestions for development, whether at a practical or theoretical level are nuanced and informative. This makes demands on students to be ambitious and to engage with current research and practical methodologies. The programme is enhanced by the range of specialisms brought by staff who are active in both written and practice based research outcomes.

My one concern about this is that the demands on staff time to support students achieving at the highest level is high. In particular I was impressed by the very careful support given to groups within their practical assessments. This certainly contributes to the level of achievement and the degree of professionalism students attain that will support their future in arts related work. However, the time commitment from the staff is considerable and I question how much this impacts on the time that they therefore have available for the research that strengthens the department?

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

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.

Yes I was given sufficient material and every effort was made for me to access materials as required.

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 this was all in good order and sufficient. The marking criteria is very well explained to students and the marking is clearly tailored to the assessment points.

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?

This was all provided through prior email ziplock folders, hard copy on the day before the board or on VLE. The nature and level of essay questions and practical assignments were appropriate for each level of assessment. There was a good range of essay questions offered and where students were in charge of determining a project (practical work) they were supported by tutors to devise appropriate subject areas.

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?

This year I was invited to view practical work in Semester 1 as suggested last year. Unfortunately I could not make the date offered. However, it would still be a good idea to offer the opportunity for the EE to attend at least one practical project each year.

The Semester 1 materials arrived in good time and were well presented. This year as agreed I was also sent POP 4 prior to coming to Leeds, including DVDs of the practical work sent by post. This was very helpful in ensuring that I had sufficient time to look at 3 courses before coming to Leeds. However when I arrived to look at the other courses it was necessary to consider units where students had queried marks which included practical presentations to view on VLE. This was time consuming but necessary and it meant that I had very little time to consider one of the courses.

Since marking is carried out online now, it would be most helpful for the EE to receive an emailed coversheet detailing suggested essays etc. for consideration and the location of all materials required on the VLE. I'm not sure that there is a VLE repository for the practical work so this might still need to be sent out by post. If this could be done even just a couple of days prior to the exam pre-meet with the department, that would be helpful.

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, broadly these were satisfactory. However, there did seem to be a higher level of tension on timing in the department and the pressure to read assessed work and see quite a number of practical presentations prior to meeting with the staff team is rather stressful for EEs. I therefore suggested that it might be helpful to make the date for student submission of work a few days earlier. Staff would adhere to the usual turnaround of marking guidelines but since the students had submitted earlier would have a less pressurised time completing second marking, submitting final marks and following up on ECs.

I did attend the Board of Examiners meeting and this was run very efficiently with care taken on the few students who had anomalous results. This year again, the ECs had been discussed prior to the Board and without the EEs present which seemed entirely appropriate.

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

Yes this seemed to be done very efficiently away from the board meeting. The department, as is the case in my own department and in others I have dealings with, are experiencing increased ECs. This is a continuing problem that in part has to do with publically documented increases in mental illness (especially depression and anxiety disorders) amongst young people. This is university wide issue that requires continued monitoring and development of strategies to best support students. This department demonstrated the use of clear guidelines in regard to ECs and a sympathetic but fair approach to making reasonable adjustments in marking and extensions.

Other comments

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

FACULTY OF PERFORMANCE, VISUAL ARTS and COMMUNICATIONS
EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT: SCHOOL RESPONSE

School:	PCI	
Programme(s):	BA (Hons) Theatre & Performance	
External Examiner:	<<>>, <<>>, Programme Modules <<>>, <<>>, for School Common Modules	
Academic Session:	2015/16	
Comment:	Response / Action:	
<p>General comments</p> <p><>: the current courses at 2nd and 3rd year level are the same as last year and I therefore reiterate the same comments. The courses are commensurate with similar courses in other comparable institutions with which I am familiar. The Aims and ILOs are clearly stated in student handbooks and these map the national subject benchmark recommendations with clear indication of expected level and progression.</p> <p><>: The learning outcomes of the revised programme and new modules are consistent with and reflective of the revised benchmark statement for Drama, Dance and Performing Arts. The programme compares favourably with Drama and theatre studies programmes at similar institutions. There are excellent opportunities for learning through placements (employability) and through project work in social and community settings, identified as important features in the revised benchmarking statement. What is particularly impressive about the Leeds curriculum is its coverage of drama, dance and performing arts with students engaging with film and television, contemporary dance and popular music as well as the staple diet of theatre and performance histories, criticism and practices. Leeds students also benefit from the strong scenographic expertise of the staff team which ensures they engage holistically with attention to the visual and auditory aspects of performance environments in their theatre making (and writing).</p> <p>The programme continues to achieve high standards of teaching and learning with the best students achieving standards that surpass UG standards</p>	<p>We are very pleased with the externals' comments about the overall functionality of our programme in relation to national benchmarking standards, particularly with regard to established strengths in community-facing work, employability, interdisciplinarity and the diversity of performance environments.</p>	

Assessment and Feedback

<>: There continues to be a very good range of teaching, learning and assessment methods. There is evidence of the full marking range being used, although there is some clustering of marks across modules in the 62 to 75 range. Students continue to perform better in practical work than in written, but the gap is narrowing and this is particularly evident in work at the top of the range (e.g. Performance Project with 13 First Class marks for practice and 8 for essays). I was provided with evidence of moderating processes this year (as requested) and I was impressed by the rigour and detail.

<>: Leeds is commendable in retaining continuous assessment in spite of the burden on staff to support and evidence process based marking. Given the volume of practical work across the programme this year as a consequence of the curriculum being in transition, this is particularly commendable. It was evident that staff were carrying higher supervision and marking loads for the Individual Research Project this year due to staffing resources. This led to some changes in second marking and moderating procedures which, however, continue to be rigorous. I was concerned about the increased workload for staff but understand that this is being addressed for next year.

<>: My one concern about this is that the demands on staff time to support students achieving at the highest level is high. In particular I was impressed by the very careful support given to groups within their practical assessments. This certainly contributes to the level of achievement and the degree of professionalism students attain that will support their future in arts related work. However, the time commitment from the staff is considerable and I question how much this impacts on the time that they therefore have available for the research that strengthens the department

<>: Consistent use of the VLE to outline the course aims, content and assessment modes/criteria provide an excellent base of communication with students. Assessment points and criteria are carefully linked to the aims for the course although, as expected in a theatre course, the modes of assessment for meeting these aims are diverse.

Most degrees in our field do not make process part of their practical assessment and we are proud that our criteria and their application provide means of continuing to do so.

The newly introduced workload tool has been used for 16/17 staffing level and discussions are ongoing with HoS to address long-term staff absences.

<>: Each of the courses I looked at offered a good range of supporting bibliographies broken down into weekly segments and with both class readings and extensions for later essay research. As last year I also appreciated the supportive way that staff work with students on practical assignments through allocation of dedicated space for independent work and close monitoring of the group process.

<>: Without exception the feedback I saw for both written and practical courses was detailed and full. The online marking that has now been adopted across modules offered another layer of commentary that looked useful for student development and was being used consistently. As I have noted before, there is a strong culture evident here of tutors engaging with students' thinking and practice rather than merely evaluating assessments.

<>: This year there were fewer borderline marks being used and the full range of marks was employed although there did not seem to be so many high first class marks being awarded. I could not see any problem with this. It just reflected the work presented. My only concern here was that in one module the essay marks rewarded excelling students but the presentation marks seemed to be bunched around a low 2.1. (Modernism and Postmodernism). The presentations in both this module and in Performer Training revealed some lack of confidence in students. They did not make best use of the performative possibilities offered by group presentation. Although when raised in the staff group discussion tutors suggested teaching on presentation skills is covered in the first year, I suggest that a very short 'formative' assessment prior to the presentations might raise the ambition and confidence of students in this form of assessment.

<>: Academic standards are very good and consistent with comparable programmes in the UK. Indeed, I consider Leeds to be extremely rigorous and fair in their adherence to criteria. There appeared to be a higher prevalence of marks in the 2.2 range across levels 2 and 3 this year, but the marking was verified as appropriate. In some institutions, practical group work marks can contribute to grade inflation and I was impressed by the strategies developed to prevent this with students continuing to be marked individually and these marks being clearly differentiated from the group performance. I was still aware of the prevalence of

The School has been at the forefront of using the VLE in ways which have enabled exchange and formative feedback, as well as standardising marking practice. This has been recognised at University level and it a great encouragement our External Examiners also endorse our continuing work.

This is a useful impulse for discussion in the T&P team – also with regard to presentation skills as part of module assessments on the new BA (Hons) T&P.

This endorses our policy of maintaining the creative process as part of practical assessments, but to apply criteria to students individually after Year 1, rather than award group marks. It has proved good practice on PoP5, however, to give students the choice as to which sets of criteria they wish to be assessed by, and whether as a group or as an individual.

<p>borderline marks and would encourage staff to avoid these where possible and to determine whether the work is in the higher or lower category as this will generate a clearer profile at the end of the programme.</p>	
<p>Good practice</p> <p><>: There were many examples of good practice, for instance in the manner that students are encouraged in POP 3 and 4 to use a range of media in their practical projects. I could see the progression of this through the POP modules, such that in the course on New Writing for example, students are confidently integrating performance, film, moveable props etc. along with developing their co-written scripts. In 'Performer Training' it was clear that the presentation brief was designed to support the larger essay assignment and the resulting work was of a very good standard. Tutors continue to direct students to performance practices outside the institution whether through shows or working in a range of different community settings. This enriches student experience and helps them to bridge university research and professional life.</p> <p><>: 'This is very evidently a research led curriculum with a good balance between what is needed to provide a balanced diet of critical, historical, practical and professional perspectives with original and innovative specialist initiatives such as the cultural flashpoints module that produced some outstanding work and is some of the best second year work I have experienced. Leeds benefits from a high quality research team and their strengths in areas such as scenography, applied theatre and practice as research more broadly are evident throughout the programme.</p> <p><>: On the whole it is apparent that staff are able to teach to their research strengths and expertise. This is of great benefit to the students who learn within an active research environment that is up to date and of an excellent standard. This is evidenced both in the course content and structure but also in the very detailed feedback comments for student assessments. The suggestions for development, whether at a practical or theoretical level are nuanced and informative. This makes demands on students to be ambitious and to engage with current research and practical methodologies. The programme is enhanced by the range of specialisms brought by staff who are active in both written and practice based research outcomes.</p>	<p>We are delighted with these comments which affirm our robust standards of teaching quality as well as our commitment to the Leeds curriculum (community-facing practical choices, independent research, research-led teaching fostering student's growing research independence).</p>

<>: Good practice is evident in the structures developed for supporting staff and students in plagiarism awareness and prevention. Continuous assessment procedures to support and evidence process marking is also distinctive and commendable with staff using a variety of strategies to monitor project development.

<>: The modules are distinctive, ambitious, research led and engaging for students.

<>: The Independent Research Project, for example demonstrate impressive breadth and scope in terms of topics, but students might produce more focussed and in depth studies if they pursued areas of interest introduced at stage 2 so that they are starting from a more advanced position. They might also productively build on Strategies for Research, using the literature review as a foundation for the IRP research. This is a common issue arising from modular structures responsive to student choice. Students need to be encouraged to develop agency as learners, scaffolding the knowledge they acquire as they move through the programme.

<>: The curriculum is very clearly informed by staff research interests, particularly in terms of scenography, popular performance and cultural history, devised and physical theatre, applied theatre, audience engagement and performance and digital media. Students are clearly inspired and engaged by staff teaching to their research specialisms and this generates outstanding work from the more capable students. This is evident in dissertation work, practice based research informing the performance project, the research processes associated with the collaborative project and the very distinctive Cultural Flashpoints module which is particularly impressive in the originality of work produced and the capabilities of students as independent thinkers. Research strategies is an extremely important module within the curriculum design and it is to be hoped that this can be developed next year to ensure that students make progress from formative to summative assessment and build on this knowledge at stage 3.

We are continuously striving to strengthen the links between our research skills module at Level 2 (previously Strategies for Research, now Researching Theatre & Performance) and the Y3 Independent Research Project. We have already stepped up these efforts in inductions and module lectures in 2016/17.

Procedure and communication with External Examiners

<>: The Semester 1 materials arrived in good time and were well presented. This year as agreed I was also sent POP 4 prior to coming to Leeds, including DVDs of the practical work sent by post. This was very helpful in ensuring that I had sufficient time to look at 3 courses before coming to Leeds.

<>: There is still a need for consistency in the presentation of examiners packs. The majority are in very good order, sent (or made available) in good time with module guidelines, the full run of marks and issues identified for the attention of the external. For practical work, however, documentation needs to be more clearly presented so that examiners can easily identify productions and students. This material needs to be made available in advance as it is time consuming to review.

<>: Since marking is carried out online now, it would be most helpful for the EE to receive an emailed coversheet detailing suggested essays etc. for consideration and the location of all materials required on the VLE. I'm not sure that there is a VLE repository for the practical work so this might still need to be sent out by post. If this could be done even just a couple of days prior to the exam pre-meet with the department, that would be helpful.

<>: [...] it might be helpful to make the date for student submission of work a few days earlier. Staff would adhere to the usual turnaround of marking guidelines but since the students had submitted earlier would have a less pressurised time completing second marking, submitting final marks and following up on ECs.

The introduction of Directing to the programme needs to be monitored and reviewed for next year to ensure that this doesn't become too resource intensive and that standards are maintained. This will be popular with students and care needs to be taken that the teaching and delivery is appropriate to the changing context of contemporary theatre practice. Students would benefit from access to the production work of current directors (e.g. seeing and reviewing productions) and need to develop research skills, demonstrating familiarity with the production histories of the texts they are working with. The documentation for this module needs to be presented in ways that enable examiners to easily and swiftly identify productions and

Discussions around this are currently taking place within the programme team, with different options around the recording and storing of filmed footage being considered.

We will also be more consistent in sending out written feedback for practical work to External Examiners.

This influenced our discussions around submission dates for 2016/17 and as a consequence, we believe that the submission dates of practical projects and particularly the IRP (due a week earlier than in 16/17) are more in balance with each other.

This was discussed at programme level and with the module leader, with the majority of points addressed for 2016/17. We are discussing issues of documentation for our practical assignments overall, so this concern will also be addressed as part of that.

<p>students. On the basis of the material I saw, the text based work (practical and written) wasn't as strong as other areas of practice in the curriculum and this is an area where the relationship between practical and written work needs to be clearly articulated and where we might expect to find strong synergies.</p>	
<p>Head of School:</p>	
<p>Programme Director:</p>	<p><<>></p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>9th Nov 2016</p>