

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):	BA Managing Performance
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Designated modules: PECI2707 Arts Marketing; PECI3107 Enterprise Project; PECI3701 Contemporary Issues in Arts and Culture; PECI3301 Strategic Arts Management; PECI8004 Year in Industry. [With earlier iterations of some of these modules, still available to students retaking.]
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

The decision to close BA Managing Performance as a stand-alone programme was taken during my time as external examiner. Investment in programme development halted at that point presumably. A number of modules forming part of the programme will continue to run and have been refreshed.

BA Managing Performance has been wound down with exemplary professionalism, avoiding any possible detriment to students. (Phasing out a programme is nowhere near as disruptive as closing a department. In practice, BA Managing Performance students always did work alongside students enrolled on other programmes run by the School of Performance and Cultural Industries.)

In five years externalling for BA Managing Performance I have come to know the modules well and the people teaching them reasonably well. I have been consistently impressed with the quality and generous extent of module documentation (behind that very thoughtful module design), with the rigour of marking processes and with both the tone and the content of staff feedback to students. Evidence of second marking / double marking has always been provided. A clear, shared understanding of marking standards and of attributes characterizing work in various classes has been achieved and is carefully maintained.

Leeds' PCI academics are exceptionally good at delivering frank feedback to weaker students. This candid feedback culture is admirable: do everything you can to keep it alive.

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 Aims and ILOs still seem to me to be appropriate (this is my fifth report as external examiner) – challenging, aiming at standards of professional competence defined by cultural industry insiders not by academics, and feasibly achievable given the quality of teaching evidenced.

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.*

This is a niche programme, practically unique to Leeds. National subject benchmarks are not applicable. Staff have an expert understanding of real-world performance management expectations, and the programme succeeds in explaining these to students.

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.*

Assessment methods seem to me to be well designed and well structured. They have real-world roots in some cases (business planning exercises and reflective accounts contextualizing actual work experience, e.g.) and make rigorous demands both of students and of markers.

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. BA Managing Performance is or was a programme particularly benefiting students with entrepreneurial flair, supporting their efforts to gain practical experience and equipping them with useful knowledge. Those determined to make the most of opportunities available continue to produce high quality work; those less inclined to exercise initiative inevitably get less out of it.

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.

Course documents are refreshed from year to year. Where necessary – in response to developments in the outside world, and in response to evolving student needs – modules are refocused and retitled. Their intellectual and vocational currency is determinedly maintained. The programme has always encouraged students to think about “Managing” in broad terms, promoting the development of transferable skills. It is good to know that a number of BA Managing Performance modules will continue to run in future, so that students on other programmes can benefit from them.

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.

Research personally undertaken by members of the School exerts a healthy influence on curriculum design and features prominently in reading lists. Learning and teaching happens in a lively, practically-grounded intellectual atmosphere. Students encountering theory also learn how to critique it effectively.

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.

Fully sufficient, yes.

- 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.

I was fully, efficiently and as always very courteously briefed. Thanks to all concerned.

- 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. My input was not required.

- 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; yes. Scripts have sometimes seemed to me to be too extensively annotated (when feedback reports conveyed much the same information in continuous prose form) – but from the students' point of view this would hardly count as a fault.

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

N/A. I did not examine dissertations.

- 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?**

Administrative arrangements were fully satisfactory. I was not able to attend the Board meeting but submitted a short report by email in advance of the meeting having looked at samples of work remotely. I was fully satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

- 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

For the record, here are the comments I submitted by email before the exam board meeting on 16 June 2016:

This is my fifth and final year externalling for Managing Performance. I know the modules well and the people teaching them reasonably well. This year as previously I've been consistently impressed with the quality and generous extent of module documentation (behind that very thoughtful module design), with your marking rigour and with both the tone and content of staff feedback to students. On the basis of student work, marks and feedback sampled I shall be happy to sign off all the marks provisionally awarded to students taking all the modules assigned to me -- except PECI8004 Year in Industry (for which samples of work are not yet available).

Evidence of second marking / double marking was supplied where relevant. A clear, shared understanding of marking standards and of attributes characterizing work in various classes was evident; unsurprisingly considering the stability and experience of the teaching team, and the openness of communication between team members.

This year (my impression has varied a little from year to year) I sense that work marked first class in your School would get practically the same first class mark in my Department. High 2:1 ditto. Below about 65 you may be marking slightly harder than we do. Work that would scrape a 2:1 mark in my Department probably would not in yours. You are more willing to mark below 50 than most of my immediate colleagues seem to be. You are exceptionally good (I've said this before) at delivering full and frank feedback to underperforming students. This candid feedback culture is admirable: do everything you can to keep it alive.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and have taken a number of valuable ideas back from Leeds to my own university. I may well have learned more from you than you have from me. Thanks everyone for making visits so pleasant and remote encounters so straightforward. Good luck for the future.

[PECI8004 marks were signed off on 6 September 2016.]

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

School:	Performance and Cultural Industries
Programme(s):	BA (Hons) Managing Performance BA (Hons) Managing Performance (International) BA (Hons) Managing Performance (Industry)
External Examiner:	<<>>
Academic Session:	2015 - 2016

Comment:	Response / Action:
The programme Aims and ILOs still seem to me to be appropriate (this is my fifth report as external examiner) – challenging, aiming at standards of professional competence defined by cultural industry insiders not by academics, and feasibly achievable given the quality of teaching evidenced.	We thank <<>> for <> recognition of the ‘real world’ focus of the programme, and the range of practical and professional opportunities it offers. We are confident that as the school continues to evolve and develop that appointments will continue to reinforce relevant research interests and professional experience in the Cultural Industries.
Assessment methods seem to me to be well designed and well structured. They have real-world roots ... and make rigorous demands both of students and of markers. PCI academics are exceptionally good at delivering frank feedback to weaker students. This candid feedback culture is admirable: do everything you can to keep it.	The clarity of School assessment procedures and guidelines is paying off, with SEQs improving in this area. We appreciate the confirmation of the quality, and accuracy, of our feedback – especially with the weaker students. Again the published criteria for all of the letter grades helps significantly in this area.
BA Managing Performance is or was a programme particularly benefiting students with entrepreneurial flair, supporting their efforts to gain practical experience and equipping them with useful knowledge. Those determined to make the most of opportunities available continue to produce high quality work; those less inclined to exercise initiative inevitably get less out of it.	The degree to which students can define differing pathways through years two and three has always favoured those with clarity of vision and entrepreneurial flair. The numbers continuing to take the modules which focus on Arts Management within the new degree programme gives us confidence that this area will continue to be delivered and supported.

Course documents are refreshed from year to year. Where necessary – in response to developments in the outside world, and in response to evolving student needs – modules are refocused and retitled. Their intellectual and vocational currency is determinedly maintained	Although some modules have been phased out the reality is that most have either evolved or have been transferred into the new programme. Hence a continuous programme of refreshment, updating and renewal continues – driven by the contemporary context which is so pertinent to most of our academic work.
Research personally undertaken by members of the School exerts a healthy influence on curriculum design and features prominently in reading lists. Learning and teaching happens in a lively, practically-grounded intellectual atmosphere. Students encountering theory also learn how to critique it effectively.	We welcome the recognition of the research-led curriculum and that developing the engagement with a range of theories (even those of sometimes variable validity) is important not only for the development of the discipline, but also in the enhancement of students' criticality in reviewing and evaluating literature.
Head of School:	<<>>
Programme Director:	<<>>
Date:	1st February 2017