

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QA Team received 26/06/2017

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	<i>Creative Writing</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Creative Writing Modules
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

The creative writing modules I have examined this year provide an excellent balance between the 'tradition' of creative writing and innovative practice developing from the creative and theoretical research interests of staff. There modules are designed to suit the needs of those who have some prior knowledge of creative writing in addition to those approaching the subject for the first time. There is an excellent balance of theoretical, contextual and creative practice in all modules commensurate with creative writing pedagogy in higher education. There is innovative practice in assessment with activities such as the timeline ensuring that a broad range of skills are developed within and across modules.

Enhancements made from the previous year

This is my first year as an examiner at the University of Leeds.

Matters for Urgent Attention

N/A

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y / N
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y / N
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y / N
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

N/A

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
The suite of Creative Writing modules as well considered and comprehensive in providing		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
Some modules take their focus from staff research and staff professional interests; for example with Travel Writing. This is evident through some of the core content of the modules and from some module titles. This approach is positive in that it demonstrates research informed teaching and ensures currency in the curriculum. This feeds through to innovative assessment practices, in particular the use of the time-line.		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
N/A		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
N/A		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
N/A		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
The creative writing modules in the Lifelong Learning Centre contribute to a range of programmes throughout the University. Staff knowledge of the students and how to ensure that the modules would sit within and alongside broader programme aims was impressive. The individual module assessments are well aligned to module outcomes.		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
Given the wide variety of academic experiences of the students taking these modules the cohort scored well on across modules. There was a high level of attainment with many students scoring in the 2:1 category. The work produced embraced practical and theoretical concerns and students managed both aspects of module requirements. The work was comparable to that produced in other HEIs.		

There is clear evidence that feedback is ongoing and developmental. Formative feedback in addition to comprehensive summative feedback aids student development. This takes staff a great deal of time and focus and they are to be congratulated on such detailed attention to detail.

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y

The material I received was comprehensive and clear. The course leader and administrator were consistently helpful and open. It is useful to have access to Blackboard and to be able to survey course material in addition to assessments. This provides an excellent overview of the modules and the process that leads to assessment.

The courses are well structured and well organised. There is a focus for each week's session and associated critical and creative reading/viewing is clearly identified.

Other comments

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

The creative writing team are to be congratulated on their attention to their students. It is usual that programmes such as this draw on the skills of practitioners. The course leader has done well to ensure that there is excellent communication with the course tutors and this seems to have translated in to a quality experience for students. This aspect of course and modules co-ordination should not be underestimated and is to be highly valued. There is evidence of ongoing module reflection and portfolio development across the team of tutors.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School	

*If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.

Completing the School response

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at qat@leeds.ac.uk. External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

The modules have been carefully developed over time, in consultation with staff and in response to student feedback, to try and offer a good range of innovation and 'tradition'. It is wonderful to see this recognised. Working with students with significantly different levels of skills and experience in writing creatively is challenging; it is heartening to see that the examiner feels we are meeting the needs of our students within this framework.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

Response to Matters for Urgent Attention

If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:

N/A

Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Each of these points appears to have been satisfactory.

Standards**Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)**

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Each of these points appears to have been satisfactory. A particular strength of the programme is the skill set that the tutor team bring to the table.

Assessment and Feedback**Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)**

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Each of these points appears to have been satisfactory. Giving feedback for creative assignments is, indeed, time consuming and the tutor team are dedicated to providing comprehensive and helpful feedback to students.

The Progression and Awards Process

Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Each of these points appears to have been satisfactory. We do endeavour to communicate well and it is encouraging that this has enabled the examiner to access all materials effectively.

Other comments

Response to items included in the 'Other Comments' section of the report

We work well as a team and communicate any issues to one another as quickly as possible. It is wonderful to hear that the examiner was able to track this effort across the modules.