

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	English
Subject(s):	<i>English Literature</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA English Literature MA English Literature (Modern and Contemporary pathway) MA English Literature (Renaissance pathway) MA English Literature (Romantic pathway) MA English Literature (Victorian pathway) MA American Literature and Culture Critical and Cultural Theory (English Studies) Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.

The programmes as a whole seemed to be working well producing a good range of work. The module that I thought produced particularly interesting work was that on Victorian New Media.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

This is my first year in the role.

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

I raised areas that I thought the Department might want to consider at the Examiners' meeting but am happy to reiterate these:

The marking seemed to become less certain at the bottom end – the marking criteria for a Fail do not really help markers to discriminate below 50. Since there were a couple of scripts in this category it would seem worth refining the criteria to reflect this.

I recommend the addition of a box on the feedback sheets along the lines of "How to improve your work" to ensure consistency of markers' feedback and formative advice. Some markers did this extremely well, others less so.

I recommend moving to a full pathway model. We have done this at my institution very successfully and it gives students a sense of choice and optionality that they seem to desire.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	Y / N

3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / 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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

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

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y / N
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y / N
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y / N

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

Overall the programme offers students a diverse range of subjects that are clearly developed out of the specialist areas of research of members of staff. Courses are well designed and structured with clear aims and outcomes. Feedback was generally of a very high standard and robust. Marking was consistent within and across courses.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
-----	---	-------

Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)

All of the above

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

The taught MA offers a good sense for students to achieve a base level of knowledge. The research methods course ensures that scholarly standards are communicated. An achievement of 65 or more on the MA should ensure that a student is fully equipped to proceed to a PhD.

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: 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></p> <p>Assessment methods were appropriate for the discipline, largely consisting of an end of module essay. Marks are given by the first marker and confirmed by the second marker.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on 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:</i></p> <p>A two-tier performance was often in play, with OS students managing to pass at the bottom end whilst having problems of expression and 1st language interference, and students intending to proceed to a PhD excelling at the top end. This is entirely consistent with comparable courses. As mentioned at exam board, two of the student dissertations stood out for me as being of exceptional quality: those by _____ (on US and N.Korean literature in relation to oppression) and by _____ (on the form of the labyrinth in metafiction). These were original, well-argued, well researched and with an impressive range of reading and scholarship displayed.</p>		
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

The Progression and Awards Process

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

33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y / N
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>		

Other comments

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

The process was well-organised and well run. was an efficient administrator and the exam boards and meetings all ran extremely smoothly.