

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QAT Received 14/02/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science

Religious Studies

MA Religious Studies and Global Development
MA Religion and Public Life
MA Theology and Religious Studies
THE05075M Dissertation (Religious Studies and Global Development)
THE05175M Muslims, Multiculturalism and the State
THE05325M Religion and Society: Research Process and Methods
THE05355M Religion, Society and Public Life
THE05580M Dissertation
THE05900M Theology and Religious Studies: Extended Dissertation

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.

None specifically to note this year.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

The programme team have ensured that evidence of clear moderation is presented for each module and each student.

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.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment - NA

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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment - NA

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
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

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

The programme is suitably designed to ensure progression – while it is all examined at Level 7 the module structure enables students to develop the specific skills and knowledge required to complete final dissertations to a high standard.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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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)

Module content is clearly supported by current research and the knowledge base of research active scholars.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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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)?	N
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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
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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.

This is a well-designed programme, where assessment is clearly aligned with learning.

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
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19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
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<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>Student achievement is comparable with the performance of student undertaking Level 7 work on similar programmes.</p> <p>There was no specific evidence of variances in performance of this cohort of students.</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> <p>The administration and evidence of feedback to students is strong. It would be interesting to be informed as to the numbers of students who elect further face-to-face follow up.</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
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?	N (see below)
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	N (see below)
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? Nb coursework marksheets	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?	N
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?	NA as not present at meeting

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

The paperwork for this examination committee comes very late to External examiners.

It would be useful for the MA team to consider putting together an External examiner's pack for each year that should include: Updated Handbook; Programme Annual Review documentation; any additional list of minor or major changes to the programme/modules.

Re qs 25 and 27: Assessment titles are not sent to me for review. If they are unchanged from previous years this is not a problem; if they are amended this should be a normal part of the administration of the programme.

Other comments

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

The programme team should review the number of extensions provided to students. While numbers are not great on this selection of modules, in several cases 50% of a cohort (3/6 or 1/2) have extensions. It may be that review leads to a clear decision that current arrangements are satisfactory, but the number of extensions should be considered at an appropriate committee.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Name of Examiner:	
Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	AHC/PRHS
Address for communication:	School of Philosophy, Religion & History of Science University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

*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

N/A

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

No comment required.

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:

N/A

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:

No comment required.

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:

We have not, up to now, kept a formal record of numbers of students seeking further commentary on their feedback, but our impression is that this it is very rare for students to do this, which we hope is an indication that the level of feedback received is regarded as sufficient.

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:

We are grateful for the suggestion that externals be provided with an information pack, including programme and handbook, programme reviews, a note of any changes to programme structure or to assessment questions. Programme specifications and module handbooks are available online and externals are given access to these, but we are certainly willing to supplement this material with programme reviews, and to provide hard copies of the Taught Postgraduate Handbook and feedback sheets. Although, for our undergraduate programmes, it is standard practice to send externals draft exam papers, we do not extend this to assessed essays, and at MA level, all assessment is by essay. However, all assessment materials can be made available to externals, via the VLE, in advance.

Other comments

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

On the question of extensions, the absolute number is actually quite small, though, given small registrations, the proportion of the total number of students can be quite high. There is control over this, as the extensions can only be granted by the programme leader, not individual module leaders. Having considered the matter, we believe the current system works well, and that extensions, when given, are adequately justified.