

# The University of Leeds

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016– 2017

### Part A: General Information

#### Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Design
Subject(s):	<i>Art and Design</i> International Foundation
Programme(s) / Module(s):	DESN0010 Visual Research and Drawing DESN0020 Materials, Media and Processes DESN0030 Understanding Design DESN0040 Personal Study
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

#### Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:

Institution:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

#### 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](mailto: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?*

Yes

#### 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 learning outcomes are commensurate with similar programmes and the modules contain assignments that allow students to meet those outcomes.
- As students who are new to UK education they benefit from the requirements to source library and reference material and this allows them to become familiar with academic expectations.
- Students are expected to generate experimental, annotated work which is a challenge for some of the students, but essential for their future progress in undergraduate courses.
- The requirement to present work to staff is again a challenge, but breaks down the inhibitions of those students for whom English is not a first language and helps them to develop their critical terminology.

### 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 structure of the course is comparable with similar courses and meets national benchmarks.
- It would be preferable if students spent more time in the studio to help them to develop an understanding of the collaborative nature of design as their time with staff is limited.

### 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 sheets are clearly designed with sufficient space for tutors to give personal comments on student performance and direction for future enhancement. Students reported that they understood the comments. All work was second marked. Students have a range of assessments from portfolio work, written assignments and presentations. There is evidence that tutors consistently highlight the risks of poor performance and request students to seek an appointment to discuss specific areas that could be improved.
- Some of the Chinese students were naturally less well equipped in their use of art and design terminology and it was discussed whether some kind of peer assessment may help with this, or the use of a self evaluation tool to develop critical language. There were several issues that seem to put progression at risk this year and it would appear that the cultural shift to western style design education is a difficult transition. They have little previous experience of experimentation and visual exploration.
- The students responded better in workshop situations, where they could become immersed in and get excited by the subjects. Maybe soliciting more input from staff across the school would help with their understanding of what undergraduate study requires with specialist subject areas building a relationship between themselves and the student.
- The combination of a graphics/photography project helped to combine the two subjects and a visiting photographer added to the experience for the students. Some basic typography input could have been beneficial. These additional resources from other lecturers could make a big impact on the outcomes.

### 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.*

- The students were able and final portfolio work was in line with students on comparable courses.
- The stronger students were those who had come with some previous art and design education.
- As a small cohort the group appears to have worked well together, however there was a lack of interest in working in the studio in their private study time and therefore a strong studio culture had not developed. This means that there is little competition generated and a general lack of impetus and ambition.
- The written English of the Chinese students was variable, although they all presented themselves well in discussion.
- The students did not have a relationship with the courses for which they are intending to progress, a buddy scheme with second year undergraduates may help to give the students a better insight and motivation for their chosen specialism and help them to feel less isolated.

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.*

- The students responded well to the inclusion of Art and Design Movements in their personal study (mentioned by the previous EE) and provided some entertaining and unusual comparisons in their analysis.

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.*

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.*

All information was made freely available including the Handbook for 2016/7 and access to online facilities.

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 able to access all information in advance and review the programme, module handbooks, assignments and assessment sheets.

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?

I was not appointed until March 2017.

**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?**

All work and assessment sheets were available and I was able to meet with all students.

**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?**

I was kept well informed of all arrangements and was able to attend the board. There was discussion on the progress of two students and I was satisfied with the recommendations.

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

There were no mitigating circumstances or medical issues.

**Other comments**

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

I appreciated the openness of the staff and the access that I had to course paperwork and students.

I found that the reading lists of some of the modules are very out of date, some of the books are no longer in print and the links to the library don't all work. It is necessary to overhaul these to include online references to ensure that students do use them to inform their study and appreciate the value of these resources. The programme leader has already highlighted this as an area that requires review and ensured that up-to-date references were given within the assignments for this year.

A field trip for visual studies at the beginning of term could be a good bonding experience and would help students to recognise the need to develop ideas in sketchbooks. The Chinese students in particular are unfamiliar with the notion of presenting 'failed' or unfinished work and it is critical that they understand early in their studentship that visual note taking is a key part of the art and design process.

One student felt that he was on the wrong course, and was not expecting the amount of practical work. International recruitment should ensure that the students are clear about the nature of the course.

It could be beneficial for the Chinese students to attend the summer school at the University to further enhance their language skills.