

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Desgn
Subject(s):	<i>Fashion</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA Fashion Design
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

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 research which underpins the design work within this programme is broad ranging, analytical and very well referenced in a scholarly manner. The students fully understand how to use this investigative research to inform their practice. The design work references the images they have selected and enables the student to produce creative original designs.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

N/A this is my first year as External Examiner

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 do not have any matters which need urgent attention.

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

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 structure works very well, it has been refined over many years and provides the students with a well-rounded experience. The learning outcomes are very well thought through and I did not come across any problems with the documentation. The briefs were well planned and organised with care.

The students learn how to develop their design ideas through an explorative design process, in two and three dimensions. The technical skills are taught incrementally, the staff ensure that that the students learn how to cut patterns, and manufacture garments to a highly professional standard.

The portfolios contain projects aimed at a broad range of commercial companies; this provides the students with a body of work, which is very relevant to gaining employment within the fashion industry. The design work is creative, commercial and contemporary, with leaves students are well prepared for interviews.

This is a well-balanced course. The staff are very experienced fashion design lecturers with a wealth of knowledge in terms of their subject areas, and learning/teaching methods. Many of the students learn through making, the course is very hands on. This practical work is backed up by a scholarly approach to undertaking design research and through the more theoretical components within the programme.

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

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)

The staff are research active, they ensure that their research has a positive impact on the teaching through the use of the Yorkshire Fashion Archive and through the day to day teaching of garment construction/pattern cutting methodology. There are well thought through plans to use the archive to underpin a unit this academic year.

The positive addition of a Reader with a specialism in pattern cutting is very promising. Pattern cutting is complex to learn and a focus within this area will enhance the course, it will add a strength that other fashion courses lack.

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

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

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	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)?	N
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<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>The learning outcomes are carefully aligned to the assessments. The students are confident and fully supported. The assessment process was carried out with great care, each individual student is provided with a comprehensive breakdown of their marks and areas for improvement. High expectations for academic achievement are explained in one to one tutorials and in briefings.</p>		
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
<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>I cannot compare this cohort with previous year groups, as this is my first year in this role.</p> <p>The work undertaken sits well in terms of national standards, the portfolios are of a very high standard, they are individual with a very commercial element. The academic standards compare well with similar courses across the UK, the students have deservedly won several awards for their portfolios at Graduate Fashion Week, which is very difficult to achieve.</p> <p>The area that the staff team are going to focus on next year is the three-dimensional units in level 5 and 6. At level five they are planning to introduce an archive focused research project, which will inform the making of the garments, this seems like a very sensible and inspired development. This project will enable the staff's research to have a positive impact on the curriculum. The final year students making will have a greater emphasis placed on fabric selection and silhouette, which is also an apt amendment to the curriculum.</p> <p>One of the strengths of the course is the placement experience. The students undertake placements in some of Britain's finest design studios. They return from their time in industry fully conversant with industrial practices, confident. and very knowledgeable about methods of gaining employment. The employment rate for the course is very good.</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 course is running smoothly, the students are taught by dedicated, research active staff who ensure that every single student is provided with an outstanding in-depth experience whilst they are at the University of Leeds.</p>		

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?	NA
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
<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 course attracts excellent students with very good qualifications. These intelligent fashion students blossom whilst studying on the BA Fashion Design course, they thrive in the hands of accomplished lecturers who provide them with the support and teaching to produce very analytical and detailed design work. Staffing changes have already had a positive effect on the curriculum, no doubt any new staff will have an equally positive effect on the student experience going forward.