

**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 Design  |
| Subject(s):                   | <i>Fashion Technology</i>   |
| Programme(s) / Module(s):     | <i>Fashion Technology / Intro to Fashion Technology, Garment Production Processes, Technologies for Art &amp; Design, Research Methods 1, Research Methods 2, Fashion Management, Eco-Design &amp; Global Ecology, Design for Sports Clothing, Design Management and Trends</i> |
| Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc): | BA (Hons) Fashion Technology  |

**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 semester 1 module DESN1468 "Garment Production Processes" is a particularly creative and well thought-out element. Incoming first-year Fashion Technology BA students rehearse all the practical stages of manufacturing a simple garment; a procedure which usefully exposes them to the equipment, the various processes, and the task progressions which constitute the essential components of the fashion industry. As part of this unit, the undergraduates are also expected to compile a research journal in which they record their findings on specific aspects of garment structure. This process will helpfully inform their subsequent years on the programme. It also lays the foundations at an early stage in their university lives for writing academic reports and it encourages them to assimilate the practices which they will ultimately employ to efficiently manage their final year workload and produce a research dissertation.*

**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

**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**

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

N/A

## Standards

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

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

The Intended Learning Outcomes for Fashion Technology align well with typical job specifications of posts in the fashion industry for which graduates from this programme are being prepared. The Fashion Technology BA programme stands up well in comparison with similar courses at other institutions.

Modules such as DESN1467 "Introduction to Fashion Technology" expose Fashion Technology undergraduates to the scientific principles upon which high-performance garments are based; garment buyers and creators alike benefit considerably from an understanding of insulation, water-proofing and moisture transport. Such topics are not commonly taught in other institutions, probably because of the academic demands they place upon the students, so this module confers a useful advantage for graduates entering the jobs market. Likewise, the second year module DESN2500 "Eco-Design" which Fashion Technology BA undergraduates will encounter next year is an increasingly important area which academically inclined students should embrace.

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| 13. | Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear? | Y / <del>N</del> |
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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)

Students become involved in employing research techniques from the beginning of semester 1, as highlighted at the beginning of Part B, they are required to find out for themselves what fastening techniques are appropriate for use in various types of clothing, they also report on seam structure and performance; these reports are accompanied by a bibliography and referencing in standard format.

In the second year, the "Research Methods 1", DESN2285 and "Research Methods 2", DESN2295 modules cement these important practices in place and prepare students for their final year dissertation work. In addition to the discussion of qualitative and quantitative analysis, perhaps a little more practical data analysis might be beneficially incorporated into these modules.

Overall, the Fashion Technology BA students are encouraged to spend a considerable proportion of their time looking at the history of fashion and monitoring current trends. This is appropriate because in a fast-moving sector with increasingly short design seasons, it is vital that the undergraduates learn to keep abreast of emerging trends.

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| 14. | Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD? | Y / <del>N</del> |
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

N/A

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|-----|--|------------------|
| 15. | Does the programme include clinical practice components? | Y / <del>N</del> |
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

N/A

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

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

The first year of the Fashion Technology programme has sufficient textile content and is of an appropriate academic standard to meet the requirements of the Textile Institute. However, it is probably wise to defer application for industrial accreditation until the detailed content of the remaining two years has been firmly established.

### Assessment and Feedback

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|---|---|------------------|
| 17.   | Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| <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>The Fashion Technology programme is as yet only in its first year, but so far, the programme undoubtedly meets the expected level to merit the BA award that the students are heading towards. The second year modules that the programme is to incorporate are also of the expected level.</p> <p>The examination process is rigorous, and the marking has been carefully executed, with students being appropriately rewarded for their efforts; the full range of marks is used. Second marking of a proportion of the scripts has been carried out; this is good practice.</p> <p>Coursework components of the programme were made available for inspection and the practical work and written assignments have been appropriately graded. Detailed feedback has been made available to the students and this should help guide their future efforts.</p> <p>Both the examination questions and the coursework assessments are carefully allied with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The examination questions tend to be cast in such a way as to enable the candidates to explain and expand on what they know of a subject rather than being stymied by gaps in their knowledge. Students with practical ability as well as those of a more academic bent are also able to demonstrate their abilities in the coursework.</p> |   |                  |
| 18.   | Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?  | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 19.   | Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes? | Y / <del>N</del> |
| <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>The academic achievements of the students on the Fashion Technology programme are well up to those studying similar Honours BA awards in other institutions and this reflects well on the course structure and the quality of teaching that they have received. The enhanced technology content of the programme should bestow on this cohort a significant advantage when encountering first destination employers, as they are going to better understand the capabilities of the manufacturing technology and the implications of the materials and structures being used.</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 assessment of coursework is very thorough; the students receive verbal guidance throughout and written feedback after submission. It was noted, though, that nearly all the undergraduates misunderstood the requirement to present "reflections" on their coursework tasks and they tended to offer an operational sequence instead. Perhaps some feed-forward might assist the next cohort.</p>   |   |                  |

### The Progression and Awards Process

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| 20. | Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process? | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 21. | Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?                   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 22. | Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?  | Y / <del>N</del> |

|     |  |                  |
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| 23. | Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 24. | Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 25. | Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 26. | Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?  | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 27. | Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?   | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 28. | Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?               | Y / <del>N</del> |
| 29. | Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?   | <del>Y</del> / 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            |

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

The Fashion Technology BA programme is in its first year, so there were no final year projects to consider. Likewise, the award of degrees is not yet under consideration.

Now that students are encouraged to inspect their examination scripts, it would be helpful if a short comment were to be appended to the end of marked scripts. It is appreciated that some of the courses have large numbers of students and involve considerable marking, and that the marks tell most of the story, but weaker students might benefit from a little more guidance.

#### Other comments

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

The course development team has done a very good job in structuring the Fashion Technology BA programme. It gives every expectation of providing prospective employers with precisely the type of student that the industry needs. That said, consideration might be given to exposing students to computerised design, management and pattern cutting software. Gerber and Lectra systems both have serious drawbacks. Nonetheless, it is felt that graduates of a Fashion Technology programme would benefit from an introduction to some form of the technology that underpins the global clothing business.

It is noted that optional modules are offered to first year students who must make a choice in terms of their future specialisation before they have discovered their strengths and weaknesses. Students not opting to study pattern cutting in the first year may place themselves at a disadvantage should pattern CAD be offered in subsequent years.