

**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:	History
Subject(s):	<i>History</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA History  HIST3510 Pastors and Prelates; HIST2005 (Rule and Reform); HIST2030 (Crusades and Crusader States); HIST2170 (Patient voices); HIST2112 (Jewish states); HIST2117 (Conquered and Conquerors); HIST3001 (Conquest, Covivencia and Conflict); HIST3030 (Norman Kingdom of Sicily); HIST3290 (Popular Belief in the Medieval West); HIST3480 (Emperor and Authority in Medieval Germany); HIST3800 (Dissertation); HIST3351 (Cultural encounters)
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 BA History course is particularly notable for a range of modules which encourage serious scholarly work both in traditional areas of historical research and beyond them (for example in courses which encourage students to think beyond Europe)

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

**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*

**For Examiners in the first year of appointment**

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School 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 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 / 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.*

The course appears to me to be well designed, with clearly differentiation of expectations between modules at level 2 and level 3. The student's work leads up to dissertations which show evidence in particular of strong historiographical awareness.

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)*

Members of staff with particular areas of research expertise are teaching modules within those areas, allowing students to get a real breadth and depth of knowledge. The students' work I saw from these modules showed the effect of this in well-considered and carefully balanced work. The feedback in these modules also seemed to be becoming part of a dialogue with these students, encouraging them to think further and laying a solid foundation for their dissertation work.

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:*

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>		
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>Student's work on this course is impressive. They engage with a range of approaches and sources. As well as working with primary sources, Leeds students seem to have a particularly strong grasp of the historiography of the subjects they are studying, and to use that to their advantage. Their work shows to best effect in their dissertations which produce some really excellent first class work.</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 Examiners 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?	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 University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
 ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

**Part A: General Information****Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	History
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	History and joint honours
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 assessment process in the School of History is efficient, transparent, and fair. I was impressed by the consistency of the feedback to students – *all* the work I saw contained similar quantities and quality of feedback from internal markers. The professional support staff were exceptionally good at providing me with the material I needed in a timely manner.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

I am not aware of any, nor that any were particularly needed.

**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 / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School 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 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.*

My overall impression is of a School that runs a very well-organised programme of interesting, well-taught modules. The dissertations and Special Subjects were of a high standard and reflect well on the ethos of teaching and support in the School. From the evidence I have, therefore, the programme has clear progression and meets its intended Learning Outcomes.

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 modules I saw were all informed by the research interests of the teachers. They drew on the most recent scholarship and asked pertinent, challenging questions.

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
-----	--	---

*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
<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 assessment methods for the modules I saw were all “traditional” in the sense that they were exams, dissertations or coursework essays. This is necessary in a humanities discipline and from what I could see the School does a good job of ensuring that students are well trained in how to write with precision and build arguments based on evidence. The feedback from markers mapped very clearly onto the School’s marking criteria and so I conclude that LOs were well aligned with assessment.</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
<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>Students doing History at Leeds are clearly of a very high quality and they are producing work that is certainly comparable with peer institutions around the country with which I am familiar. The best work was historiographically informed and well written. Some of the dissertations showcased intellectually imaginative answers to interesting historical questions, and were based on a quantity and quality of original research that one would not normally expect of undergraduates.</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>I think it may be useful for colleagues to analyse whether there are too many marks in the 69/70 (or less common, the 59/60) range. These kinds of borderline cases may well be justifiable, but my impression was that there were perhaps more marks in this range than one would have expected and in several cases I think had I been a first marker I would have either moved the mark up decisively into the first class range, or down.</p> <p>One small suggestion: if possible, it would be helpful, I think, if externals (and probably internal markers as well) had a way of seeing data for each module and for the programme(s) as a whole including, for example, mark distribution, perhaps in comparison with previous years. A potential benefit of having externals is that they are in a good position to take an overview of the consistency of the process –whether some modules are marked more generously than others, for example. I want to emphasise that I have no reason at all to think that there is a problem here, but it would be useful to see some basic data in order to be even more definitive about that.</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?	Y

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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>  The Board was conducted very properly and due care and attention was paid to special circumstances. As with every aspect of the assessment process I had complete confidence that students were being treated fairly and consistently.</p>		

#### Other comments

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



**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:	History
Subject(s):	<i>History</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Undergraduate
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.*

Whereas, of course, I might have offered different marks on occasion if left to myself, I had a high level of confidence that the marking was accurate overall. There did not seem to be any evidence that any student was at the risk of a significant injustice. My confidence on this was further boosted by the clear evidence that (on all assessments I saw) that the university's procedures were being followed faithfully. Feedback was almost always full, detailed, fair and tactful. Markers were conscientious and helpful in putting forward suggestions for future improvement.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

I am not aware of any major changes.

**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*

**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
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y

7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	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*

Reflecting on my three years of examiner, it has been an interesting and rewarding experience. Leeds clearly has a very able student body and many inspiring teachers. There was plenty of evidence that second markers were engaging fully with the process, and where marks needed to be reconciled there was always an explanation of how agreement had been reached. My sense that there has been a real improvement in this respect over the last three years, and what is now being achieved is certainly very close to best practice.

In my first year as an examiner, however, I made the following observation:

'I do [...] urge that double-blind marking of dissertations be adopted. It was explained to me that the rationale for the present system (whereby the second examiner sees the first examiner's comments and mark) is that, "whilst we do try to ensure that the second marker has some knowledge of the period and topic of the dissertation, this is not always possible – and the second marker will not have had any involvement with or exposure to the dissertation topic, whereas the supervisor may at least have had a chance to become acquainted with it." However, this creates too great a risk that the second marker will simply defer to the expert knowledge of the first, rather than giving an independent assessment. The second marker should be able to give a judgement based on the dissertation's clarity, range of sources, capacity to provide an argument, etc. They *may* wish to defer to the first marker during the reconciliation process but they should not do so by default. I do think that reform is a matter of urgency and will at any rate have administrative advantages.'

To my regret, this recommendation was not acted upon. I think it should be considered again.

## 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.*

As usual I was impressed by the high quality of the modules on offer, which were stimulating and challenging and geographically wide-ranging. Last year I stated: 'I am pleased to say that I think that the programme is a very strong and varied one. The modules offered are appropriately challenging and have the capacity to introduce students to a variety of approaches to History. I have no criticisms to make either of the structure of the course or of the ILOs.' This judgement still stands.

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)*

As in previous years I saw much evidence of students carrying out excellent research, most notably in their dissertations. It is also clear that research-led teaching is at the core of the programme, and that the students are encouraged to think like historians. It is unclear to me how far teaching practice draws on current pedagogical research.

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
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
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>		
NA		

### 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>		
As in previous years, I was happy to note that a wide range of assessment methods were used and that these were appropriate to the ILOs. I think there is some scope to reflect on varying the means of assessment further, e.g. take-home exams, student-led seminars.		
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>		
I was impressed by the quality of the students' work, the vast bulk of which fell into the 2.1 and First categories. Students were able, even under exam conditions, to write well-informed, intelligent and nuanced answers to difficult questions. They were able to deploy evidence appropriately and frequently wrote well. They also often showed an impressive engagement with the historiography, being able to talk about the broader significance of the scholarship rather than just offering nominal references. There was plenty of evidence of wide reading and engagement with primary sources. A couple of the dissertations I saw were genuinely stellar, being of potentially publishable quality.		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		
On the whole, people were not hesitant about awarding good marks when deserved and equally – in happily few cases – bad ones. However, at the upper end I sensed a slight tendency towards caution. I saw very few marks of 80 and even fewer above that. Markers might sometimes think about whether they ought to go a little higher, e.g. if the criticisms of a dissertation are simply such as those which might be brought out in peer review of an article. If a piece of work really is close to publishable quality, what more can be reasonably be expected? Shouldn't the mark go higher?		

### 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?	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?	Y
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?	N
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>With respect to Q 32, I received some of the work rather late. There was also the small matter that I was not told which hotel had been booked for me until the day before the exam board: I had to nudge the administrators in order to get them to tell me where I was staying. These are small gripes but there is some scope for enhanced efficiency.</p>		

#### Other comments

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