

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

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

Faculty / School of:	Language Centre
Subject(s):	Academic Study Skills, IFY: (ELU0025) English for Academic Study: (ELU 2002 & ELU 2003) English for Communication: (ELU 1002 & ELU 1003)
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

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.

- Extensive feedback to students;
- Clear assessment briefs;
- Clear links between Learning Outcomes and the various assessments; and
- A good range of assessment types

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 number of assessments has been reduced in line with my suggestions and with University policy.

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

n/a

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 an 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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>Please see my extensive comments below.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

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>Please see my extensive comments below.</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>I felt that the standard of work produced by students was easily comparable to that of similar courses across the UK HE sector.</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>Please see my extensive comments below.</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?	n/a
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	n/a
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></p>		

Other comments

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

Academic Study Skills, IFY: (ELU0025)

This programme is very strong in developing reflective skills. All five of the assessment components have reflective elements. The feedback paperwork works well and presents students with comments which are positive, constructive and criteria-based.

The assessment load for students (and for tutors) now looks much more manageable and it is good to see that my comments from last session have been acted on. The fact that tutors are willing to consider and implement change is very pleasing to see.

The course as a whole delivers a very relevant set of skills and awarenesses. These skills will be valued by both the students themselves and by their receiving departments.

Tutors might look again at the word count for the Abstract assessment in order to make the word limit clearer to candidates.

English for Academic Study: (ELU 2002 & ELU 2003)

As was the case last year, the feedback provided to students is of a very high standard. The feedback provided in relation to the Annotated Bibliography (AB) is a good example of this. Strong students in this assessment moved beyond mere description into analysis, synthesis and evaluation thus revealing an ability in the sort of skills they will require in higher education in the future. Weaker students struggled with academic writing conventions in terms of both style and language.

In terms of the Seminar assessment, the recordings were clear and accessible for which, my thanks. The marking criteria for this are clear and appropriate and there was clear evidence of double marking. Weaker students showed little or no criticality and a lack of appropriate language led to a lack of confidence and to a poor performance. Stronger candidates were well-organised, focused well on the task at hand, and generally handled the seminar occasion very well. They used appropriate language, lexis and grammar.

All of the tasks which feature as part of the Portfolio are relevant to the HE academic context. In their own differing ways, these tasks are designed to develop critical thinking and an understanding of the structure of academic writing and of how ideas should be structured. In addition students are tested on their ability to read texts, then summarise them and finally synthesise the information they contain.

All these assessments have very clear guidelines which allow candidates to know exactly what is required of them.

I note that because these modules attract credit, it is the university's assessment scale which is exploited here. It is good to see that Turnitin makes a positive contribution to the learning experience of the cohort.

It is probably fair to say that some students did not really engage with the reflective elements of the assessment and the teaching team might look at ways of increasing this level of engagement for all students for next year.

English for Communication: (ELU 1002 & ELU 1003)

There is evidence of good practice with these modules in terms of clear marking criteria, double marking and clear assignment briefs. There was clear evidence of good levels of engagement with the assessment tasks on the part of the cohort as a whole. The assessment features a viva linked to a poster presentation. Understandably there are two separate criteria for each element of the assessment. With the poster (size A1), it was good to see that “low-tech” approaches were rewarded in the same way as approaches which were more *technology-based*. The quality of the video recordings was high and there were some very good performances indicative of some very effective and focused teaching. Strong candidates produced really effective pieces of communication which linked really well to the poster. With these strong candidates there was a good balance of text and visual elements as well as a sense of focus and relevance. There was also evidence of research on the part of these better candidates. Weaker students failed to actually refer to the poster and made very little attempt to assist the listener/viewer in navigating the poster content. They also delivered the content in a very *learned* and mechanical way.

Part of the course involves a reflective piece of writing, that is, a poem. Some students produced some really good work here reminding us that these international students can experience real difficulty in studying in a foreign cultural environment through the medium of a foreign language with all that these elements entail. Some students however indicated in their questionnaire responses that poetry was not a medium which they enjoyed expressing their feelings and ideas through. It may be that other media could be considered for this namely, artefacts which involved something artistic, photographic or musical, for example. As long as these other ways of expressing ideas are clearly seen to meet the learning outcomes for this part of the course, I would urge the teaching team to consider making these changes so as to allow all students to express their ideas through a medium that they were comfortable with.

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All these courses as a whole are characterised by clear assignment briefs, clear evidence of double marking and valuable, often extensive, feedback to students. There are clear and appropriate links between assessments and learning outcomes. The academic or communicative skills acquired are relevant and appropriate.

I would ask that the tutors involved in these courses give consideration to the more explicit testing of listening, whether this is done as a discrete listening assessment or - preferably - in some more integrated way.

As was the case last session I was able to spend quite a bit of time with the course leaders of all of these modules: I found this very valuable. It was also very useful to be able to spend some time listening and talking to a small group of students who spoke very positively of the experience they had been through.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Language Centre Director of Student Education

*Arts, Humanities and Cultures / Languages, Cultures and Societies*The Language Centre
Parkinson Building level 3**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

On ELU1002/1003 the comments on the value of the inclusion of the poetry section were very encouraging and the fact that a minority of students expressed discomfort with expressing themselves in this manner gave rise to a very valuable suggestion; that other mediums such as music, art or photography be accepted on the same theme. This will now be incorporated in the 2017/2018 modules.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

On ELU0025 (IFY), the reduction in the number of assessments this year has proven extremely beneficial for students, who were able to benefit from increased formative skills development and focussed efforts in their summative assessments. This is demonstrated both in the positive student feedback in the module survey, for which the figures have gone up this year, and an increase in the average module marks across the cohort. The grades have gone up a band and are in the 60s for every piece of assessment this year, as compared with last year's average marks falling within the 50s band. This is especially crucial for IFY students, for whom module marks of 60 and above are required for their progression onto degree programmes at Leeds.

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

Other comments

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

With regard to the word count for the Abstract assessment on ELU0025 (IFY), a proposal to amend the word count will be formally submitted to the LCTSEC next year and task instructions clarified to candidates accordingly.

In response to the suggestion to give consideration to the more explicit testing of listening, module leaders for ELU0025/26/27 (IFY) are in the process of adapting the existing Seminar and Presentation assessment tasks in order that the academic skills remain integrated, as recommended by the examiner.

In terms of the seminar assessment for ELU 2002/3, the marking criteria for this will be adapted to include references to listening skills.

On ELU1002 the suggestion to give consideration to the more explicit testing of listening, the module assessment of the final presentation and viva (with reference to a poster) will include criteria to assess the student response to questions in the viva, including nuance and implication.