

# 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 Languages, Cultures and Societies
Subject(s):	English for Academic Purposes
Programme(s) / Module(s):	ELU3009: Language for Arts and Humanities ELU3011: Language for Education
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	N/A

#### 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

N/A

#### 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?

I was provided with a copy of the previous External Examiner's report and the School's response.

#### 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

**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.*

I would like to commend the English Language Unit for introducing this series of content-led pre-sessionals, which I believe very much represent the forefront of English for Academic Purposes. It is evident that the materials writers for these modules have put a great deal of thought into these programmes, particularly in integrating subject content and language work.

Both modules provide appropriate and clearly articulated Intended Learning Outcomes and both provide students with opportunities to develop academic literacies (e.g., genre awareness and the appropriate use of sources), as well as language competence. Another positive feature of both modules is their relevance to graduate attributes, especially with regard to opportunities for group work, self-reflection and autonomous working.

There are a couple of related queries that I would like to raise. The first concerns how the themes and texts for Language for Education were selected, and similarly how the texts (in particular, Jennifer Moon's *Critical Thinking: An Exploration of Theory and Practice*, 2008) for Language for Arts and Humanities were selected. I would have raised these queries with the coordinators had I attended the Exam Board as planned. However, unfortunately I was unable to attend the Exam Board due to illness.

**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 modules compare well with similar content-led pre-sessional programmes I have taught on and assessed, either in my role as an External Examiner or as a BALEAP Assessor. The programmes are very well integrated and represent good practice.

**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.*

The design and structure of the assessment methods and the arrangements for the marking of modules and classification of awards are very good. I was particularly impressed by the assessment descriptors, which give a very clear visual representation and represent excellent practice. I would also like to say that I was impressed by the standard of marking and level of feedback across the two modules.

There are two observations that I would like to make:

The first observation echoes a point made by the External Examiner in their report of last year where they state that 'Speaking assessments, currently in the form of individual presentation, could be made more interactive (eg take the form of a small group seminar discussion) to better reflect speaking practices in the target discipline.' The response to the External Examiner's comment was that 'it is felt that assessed presentations reflect assessment methods that students experience during their postgraduate studies.' Assessment in the subject disciplines is undergoing rapid transformation and I would be very grateful if the coordinators could confirm which receiving departments/subject tutors they spoke to.

The second observation concerns the assessment for the essay and the presentation for the Language for Arts and Humanities module, where again I would like to query the choice of texts.

**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 assessments of these two modules allowed students adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs and, further, the standard of work is comparable with that of students on similar content-led pre-sessionals. I am not aware of the cohort having any notable strengths or weaknesses.

**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.*

N/A

**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.*

I believe that the approach to course design is in keeping with current thinking and research in the field of English for General Academic Purposes. However, in my view some readjustment might be beneficial (especially in terms of the course's reliance on Moon, 2008) in order that the programme more fully reflect current thinking in terms of a more discipline-specific pre-sessional.

**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.*

Yes

**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.*

Yes

**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 provided with draft examination papers/assessments.

**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?**

Yes

**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?**

The administrative arrangements were satisfactory. However, it would have been helpful if there had been greater contact with those responsible for programme delivery.

I was unable to attend the Exam Board due to illness.

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

N/A. I was unable to attend the Exam Board due to illness.

#### Other comments

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

N/A

**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Deputy Director of Student Education	
Faculty of Arts, The Language Centre	

\*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 [gat@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:gat@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**

Thank you for your positive comments on the course design of both programmes and in particular the designers' exploitation of academic language from subject specific content provided by the academic leads. Strand leaders are to be commended on their close collaboration with departments, which is crucial to the innovation involved in writing and delivering the CBPS modules at Leeds University Language Centre.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

Not commented on

**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:

N/A

**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:

The report raises a number of questions regarding themes, core readings and assessments on ELU3009: Language for Arts and Humanities and ELU3011: Language for Education

The input for the above areas comes from the academic lead whose responsibility it is to supply the content. Strand leaders do have some say and there is careful consideration when selecting suitable language and academic skills to be exploited within the materials and texts provided.

The Moon texts were chosen as core texts by the academic lead for Arts & Humanities. The strand leader has informed me that as the main topic for the programme is 'Thinking', Moon is considered suitable for this purpose; she is quite a prolific writer on this topic and has considered critical thinking carefully in terms of what it means, what academics think they mean when they talk about it, and how students understand an injunction to critically think. The rationale for its continued use in terms of language exploitation is that Moon allows for a useful navigation of the text because of the way it's set up. The reflective text by Moon gave the strand leader the idea for screencasts which were found to be a useful exercise.

With these considerations in mind, the subject matter is thought to be relevant and the mode of exploitation suitable for EAP purposes. However, we appreciate your view and it is, as you say, regrettable that the strand leaders could

not meet with you in person to discuss this in more depth in 2017. This summer we look forward to having time to discuss any questions you have; it might be that academics review their content periodically, but as yet the programmes are just entering their third year.

Regarding the question of group or individual speaking assessment, both strand leaders have communicated with departments again to check this. While there is a range of speaking assessments across MA Modules, those offered on the CBPS are considered appropriate and useful for developing students' speaking skills required in future studies. On both programmes there is also a strong emphasis on seminar discussion.

## 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:*

It was unfortunate that you were unwell on the day of progression board, thereby missing the opportunity to meet in person. More guidance and support will be provided this year should any external be unable to attend the final assessment period.

## 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**