

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:	Faculty of Arts, The Language Centre
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	ELU 3007 Language for Business Management and Enterprise
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.
The effectiveness of a subject-specific pre-sessional programme depends in great part on the strength of collaboration between the language and subject departments. In my review of this programme, this aspect appears particularly strong in comparison with similar pre-sessionals in other university contexts in my experience.

That the pre-sessional is not based on a Pass/Fail system, so all completing students will progress provides an example of good practice in terms of student support. During the board it was refreshing to witness detailed discussion of students who were flagged up as needing support in particular areas. The resultant positive effect this openness towards support must have on student experience and completion, should be commended.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
Level 3 and 4 students were taught separately as recommended in the External Examiner's report 2015-16.

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 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 aims and ILOs are highly appropriate. They have been carefully designed to allow for clarification and investigation of content along with language and academic skills development. ILOs are appropriate, supportive and respectful of learners being challenging and realistic in relation to the academic demands which are to follow. Good links are made between these and course content.

The design is creative and provides students with a supportive bridge into their subject studies. The subject-specific element is appropriately very strong being central and providing the core around which the language development takes place. This is worthy of comment since some pre-sessional modules in other institutions can feel primarily like language development programmes with some subject-specific elements tagged on.

The structure followed in ELU3007 results in fewer face-to-face whole class contact time than on some comparable pre-sessionals but the integration of significant amounts of independent study time is highly-appropriate and well-managed here.

As a general comment the approach taken here feels very much like the students are being provided with a model of how best to approach the rest of their studies – which will prove of great benefit to the learner.

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

The design of ELU3007 is clearly informed by research into the most effective way to deal with EAP skills improvement along with subject requirements.

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

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
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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
<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 / 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> <p>Summative assessment methods for this EL3007 are appropriate and in keeping with pre-sessionals delivered by other institutions: an Essay and Oral Presentation. These are clearly linked to the ILOs giving students adequate opportunity to demonstrate learning. Assessment criteria are available to students as well as staff.</p> <p>The assessments have been designed to allow students to use the skills under focus in class sessions. The realistic nature of these assessments is a positive feature with learners being required to listen and read-to-write. Feedback on drafts which inform final submissions, a key aspect of many pre-sessionals, is an important element here too.</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>Students performed well in their final submissions and presentations particularly bearing in mind the length of the course. This suggests clarity of feedback from which students could make significant learning gains. Certainly the marking of assignments seemed appropriate in the majority of cases and the marking criteria were supportive and clear for those assessing the assignments so supporting standardization.</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 marking criteria were strong for both the Essay and Oral Presentation but it would be helpful as an assessor to see how learners are supported in unpicking those for the Essay, since as they stand they could be said to be of more immediate help to teachers than learners. I think examples would help in addition to the text explaining the criteria.</p> <p>The team have put effort into creating a feedback sheet which can allow faster turnaround of marking. However I felt more annotation on the final essay would have been helpful for students to take away with them and reflect upon and feel a recommendations section for free text comments would be a supportive addition to this.</p> <p>In relation to student performance, I had sight of the final essay submission but actually I feel the draft submission would be more enlightening in many ways. I imagine it is in the draft that the skilled teacher identifies strengths and weaknesses and guides students towards making improvements. When I queried this the course director did provide me with a link to draft submissions on the day of the exam board but the link didn't work so unfortunately I didn't get to see them. I feel allowing access to these for External Examiners would be beneficial and my instinct is, the quality of feedback there would reflect well on the team.</p> <p>I was pleased to note that the module leader has every intention of altering the assessment weighting as the current split of 80% for the essay and 20% for the Oral Presentation seems unbalanced.</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
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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 N/A
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N N/A
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N N/A
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

I assessed ELU3007 and ELU3006 both subject-specific pre-sessionals but very different in many ways. As I was reviewing them both, I could see opportunities for more standardization in approach and sharing of good practice. For example, the ILOs on ELU3007 were extremely strong and very focused on academic literacy and skills development and ELU3006 could benefit from integrating a similar style. ELU3006 assessment feedback was more detailed in terms of written comments which was a little less well-developed in ELU3007. ELU3007 had a very slick, integrated joined up feel in terms of content and tasks which was appropriate for such a short course. ELU3006 was less so, which makes it more demanding of the students.

The module leader expressed some concerns that students on ELU3007 were not all Business Management and Enterprise students. I would support this concern since the fact that a subject-specific pre-sessional exactly matches the future study needs of the student is its strength and USP, without that match, the student experience could be compromised.

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 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

Thank you for your report for ELU 3007 Language for Business Management and Enterprise and for your helpful and very positive comments, not only in your written report, but also in the verbal feedback you gave us on the day of your visit.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

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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:

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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:

Thank you for your positive comments in this section and particularly in point 13, in which you refer to the robust design of ELU3007. Remit for course development has been provided and Strand Leaders will be participating in structured peer reviews during terms 2 and 3 to facilitate the process of achieving standardisation across modules, over the next 1 – 2 years. Your concluding comments on this module will serve to highlight its strengths and are therefore appreciated.

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:

It is encouraging that you suggest that the quality of tutor feedback is high, as this was an area of focus for training and standardisation during induction weeks in response to EE reports in 2016, . However, I fully agree that the quality of tutor feedback across programmes can only be evaluated if tutor input at draft stages is made available for Externals to see and these will therefore be made available in 2018.

I also agree that students benefit greatly from tutor feedback and annotations and that, if possible, these should be similar both in terms of quality and quantity for all draft submissions. Unfortunately, due to the high assessment and feedback demands on tutor workload on these short programmes, final scripts tend to contain fewer annotations; usually one page of language feedback and brief content comments thereafter. Teachers are required to make 'free comments' at the bottom of the highlighted criteria sheet, but this will be double checked for 2018 and clear instructions provided for in Handbook.

The tight turnaround of term 4 programmes is something to potentially review; the possibility of spreading assessments out more evenly could be a consideration for leaders, thus allowing more time for tutors to support students at the final stage of writing.

Advice to support students in unpicking the writing criteria is useful and supports other External Examiner comments, . Some materials have already been designed to support students in using the descriptors; the intention is now to develop these across programmes. A training session for tutors on how to use the criteria to facilitate learner autonomy could also be offered in induction weeks for 2018.

I can confirm that the assessment and weightings have been changed for this programme.

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:

Thank you for confirming that procedures went relatively smoothly and apologies again for any issues you experienced due to Minerva being down on that day. In 2018 strand leaders will be asked to back up external information as a precaution.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your useful comparison of Modules ELU3006 and ELU3007. Your report will inform strand leaders on the Business programmes in peer reviews and will help facilitate standardisation over the next 2 years.

Wherever possible we aim to match students to the pre-sessional programme that will best meet their academic needs. Decisions regarding students destined for joint MA programmes are made after gaining advice from forwarding departments as a priority. Mapping procedures and programme development questions are being considered to ensure the best possible student experience for next year.

Many thanks again for acting as External Examiner for this programme.