

**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:	Language Centre English Language Unit
Subject(s):	<i>Preessional EAP</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Language for Marketing, Language for Economics and Finance
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	NA

**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 design of the programmes is in itself innovative. The way in which the content and assessment of the strands has been designed to align with the needs of their respective schools/disciplines rather than taking a generic approach to the development of academic skills and language is interesting and feedback from students indicates that it is effective.

I particularly like the use of student exemplars, the formative use of TurnItIn and the focus on the notetaking skill. In general, a balance between helping students develop academic skills and content language seems to have been achieved.

**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*

The issue of large class size seems to be one of concern to teachers and managers. Although I understand that this was caused by the unexpected departure of a teacher, I believe it is important that a plan is in place to avoid this in the future since it could have a negative effect on teacher morale, the quality of marking, etc.

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

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	NA
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	NA
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	NA

**For Examiners completing their term of appointment**

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
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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?	NA
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	Y

*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*

It is clear that the standard of teaching and assessment on the courses as well as the management of these remains high. I am pleased to see that the tracking of students who progress from the preessional courses to their degree courses seems to be more organised and some teachers are undertaking tracking studies.

I am very grateful that my suggestion to reduce the number of strands for which an individual EE is responsible was implemented.

## 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.*

Both courses compare very favourably with other such preessional EAP courses across the sector which are designed to improve international students' academic English and allow them to progress to university degree study with the requisite skills and confidence. Indeed the innovative structure of the courses which aims to provide students with a realistic experience of academic study in their discipline whilst developing their academic English skills, should be seen as something of a model for preessional programmes in other institutions to emulate.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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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 courses have been developed with a clear recognition of the need to align the content and assessment of a preessional course with the needs of a particular discipline. This is also very much in line with current thinking and research into how EAP instruction and support can be most effective and how EAP teachers can work closely with colleagues delivering instruction in the disciplines.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	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?	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)?	N
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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>Both courses use assessment methods which link closely to the learning outcomes of each strand although the mix and weighting of assessments is different. The Economics and Finance strand includes a formatively assessed presentation, while in the Marketing strand this is formatively assessed. In the Economics and Finance strand the academic essay is weighted at 45% while in the Marketing strand it carries a weighting of 70%. These differences reflect the intention of aligning each strand with the needs of its related degree course.</p> <p>I strongly support the inclusion of a writing exam in the assessment of both courses because it gives students an opportunity to develop exam skills and also helps to give a more balanced overall assessment of their academic writing ability since the AWP is a much more highly scaffolded task.</p> <p>The AWP assessments have been carefully constructed to allow students to receive key input through lectures, reflect on this, carry out independent reading with the help of reading lists and receive formative feedback on drafts. All of this ensures that students learn from the assessment process itself. All assessments have clearly specified grading criteria, which are available to the students via the VLE and course handbooks. Grids indicating the performance of students in specific aspects of the assessment made the scoring system transparent and this together with feedback comments from the marker showed students which areas they might need to concentrate on in future assignments.</p> <p>Based on the samples I scrutinised, marking is fair and the marking process is effective in both strands. Feedback on assessments is generally of high quality although there is some disparity in the quantity and level of detail provided by different markers.</p> <p>In general, student performance points to the high quality of the teaching and learning on the two courses. Strand leaders commented on the high level of motivation of the students and the commitment of the staff.</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>Overall, it is clear that the students were able to demonstrate their progress in the key skills they will need on their various postgraduate courses. Assessment results indicated the overall strength of their cohorts although it was noticeable that many students find academic writing in an exam context challenging.</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>		

One suggestion I have for the group presentation assessment is that all students in the group should be required to deliver part of the main body of the presentation (rather than just to introduction and/or conclusion). This would provide them with more opportunity to display their ability to use and synthesise evidence to support a stance, critique other viewpoints and studies, structure an argument, etc.

### 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?	N
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?	NA
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	NA
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 / 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:*

Although I greatly appreciated the reduction in the number of strands I was asked to look at, I still felt that I needed more time to get a fuller picture of the courses. I would have particularly valued more time to talk with the two strand leaders. A meeting with a few of the teaching team would also be beneficial. I am also not clear on whether having sight of exam papers before they are set is part of my brief. Question 25 above would suggest that it is. Given the intensive nature of summer preessionals, I am not sure how possible this would be but if exam papers were available it might be beneficial to have the EE's views and suggestions.

### Other comments

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

**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](mailto: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 very positive comments on course design and assessment for Modules ELU3005 (Finance and Economics) and ELU3004 (Marketing).

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

Tracking of students from pre-sessionals into department was a question raised in the 2016 report and a system was devised this year whereby students were categorised into three groups; the third group being offered bespoke in-session support whenever possible.

**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:

It was regrettable that staffing for EU3004 was a particular difficulty due to one teacher resigning to take another post and another being required to stop teaching due to poor standards. Contingency plans were put into place accordingly and the strand leader and teachers are to be commended for their professionalism in this less than ideal situation. We have a generous FTE allocation for summer 2018 and recruitment is starting earlier in the hope of securing the right staffing for next year.

**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:

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## 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:*

Thank you for your positive comments on the standards of tutor feedback evidenced in 2017. This was an area for development in response to external examiner feedback in 2016. However, we take on board your concern that some tutors will still benefit from clear guidance to standardise the quantity and level of detail that should be provided and we will continue to reinforce this during our induction weeks in 2018.

## 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:*

In 2018 external examiners will be given access to Minerva at the beginning of the course and strand leaders will make contact to deliver details of course overview, task deadlines and facilitate access to draft tasks and formative work as and when this becomes available. We will also look at how to co ordinate meeting with teachers and leaders on the day of the progression board, the difficulty always being that this is end of course and leaders have a number of other demands at the close of their programmes. However, earlier contact throughout will hopefully smooth out this whole process.

## Other comments

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