

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:

Music

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA Music (+ Industry and International)
BMus Music
BA Music with Enterprise
Graduate Diploma
MArts, BA Music and Music Psychology

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 integrated masters programme is an innovative way of encouraging student progression. The undergraduates are raising the quality of their academic work to continue to postgraduate level.

Music students teaching in school module provides useful vocational training within the University setting.

Years abroad and with industry give students the opportunity to broaden their horizons, which is good practice, and remains unusual among British music degrees.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

There have been changes to the assessment of performance.

It is helpful to be able to access work electronically. Those pieces of work that were not easily sent in that form were readily available to me in hard copy (or in the electronic music studio) when I visited Leeds.

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
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.

This is a well-designed programme that caters to a varied student cohort, providing solid academic training alongside providing opportunities to develop vocational and practical interests. Student progression through the years is monitored and encouraged appropriately. The aims and intended learning outcomes are well matched.

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)

Staff often teach on their own areas of research expertise; it was also interesting to hear how students in psychology in particular were being integrated into research projects.

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 programme assesses students in a variety of ways, from written exams and coursework to workshops, presentations, composition, and performance. I am aware from conversations with colleagues that the School is considering alterations to the first-year modules in particular to ensure that the manner of assessment (or the kind of work being submitted) develops study and presentation skills in appropriate ways. The decision this year to 'mix up' groups of markers for dissertations is also a good initiative. The new procedure for marking recitals began this year (I was pleased to be able to attend a day of recitals this time) and worked efficiently and fairly. I would recommend deciding on a policy about how to penalise recitals that do not comply with the time restrictions, in a similar manner to the guidelines for dealing with written work that is too short or too long.</p> <p>The arrangements for marking of modules are robust (though the period allowed for marking might be lengthened so that colleagues do not feel too rushed), and the classification of awards is clear.</p> <p>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods is high, as made evident through the proportion of different classifications of degrees awarded, and by the fact that there were few borderline cases this year.</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>There are some very strong individual students within the cohort, who produced some excellent work, particularly in Dissertations, Music Psychology, and Composition. It is also obvious that some students are performing very well across the board from their first year, and it was good to see the School encouraging their development by recognising their achievements. Weaker students are also well catered for and nurtured in appropriate ways (academic writing and presentation skills are key). Creativity is a feature of the strongest students – the best Music Technology students are a good example.</p> <p>The cohort is comparable to other courses.</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 assessment and feedback was all handled impeccably, with comments matching marks, and typically clear guidance being offered to students about how to improve their work.</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?	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?	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></p> <p>Everything ran very smoothly and I was satisfied with all arrangements and results.</p>		

Other comments

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

I would like to thank everyone in the School for their assistance. Also, I was delighted to be able to attend the Student Expo the day before the Examination Board. This is an excellent, mostly student-run, initiative that showcases student achievement and that, as it gets established, will enhance the academic musical community immensely.

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:

Assessment Lead

School of Music,
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT

**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. 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

2016-17 is the first academic year to recruit on to the Integrated Masters MArts, BA Music and Music Psychology course, and as such it is encouraging to receive the Examiner's positive comments about the innovative nature of this programme. This programme complements opportunities for broadening and vocational training that are embedded throughout our portfolio of programmes and it is pleasing to note the Examiner's recognition of the elements of good practice that are evident within these.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The School of Music was delighted that the Examiner was able to attend a day of performance recitals this year and that changes to the assessment recitals were seen to be working efficiently and fairly. It is also pleasing to note that arrangements for the Examiner to access work that is challenging to submit in electronic format were satisfactory.

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:

N/A

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 is particularly pleasing to note the Examiner's positive comments about the course structure. The comments surrounding the breadth of provision offered within the programme, the relationship of taught content to staff research interests, and the relationship between teaching and student participation in research activity in the music psychology modules resonate with core values of the Leeds Curriculum and are therefore particularly encouraging to receive. The School is pleased to echo the Examiner's comments in question 19 about the excellent quality of some Dissertation, Composition and Music Psychology work that was completed this year, as well as the observed strong levels of creativity in Music Technology work.

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:

Developing assessment and feedback practice has been a central concern of Teaching Enhancement Scheme activities within the School in recent years and, as such, it is particularly edifying that the Examiner has highlighted staff's efforts to ensure a consistently transparent relationship between marks and feedback, and noted the quality of guidance offered via feedback.

The comments about the range of assessment types provided throughout the programme are also gratifying, not least given that concerns about further supporting our students in developing requisite skills to complete various types of assessment (notably extended writing and research projects) throughout their course has been central to our recent programme revisions.

We are pleased to note the Examiner's positive comments about changes made to the assessment processes for Dissertations and Recitals, and the School will continue to explore the decision to 'mix up' groups of markers for the Dissertations following reflection on this process given that this is the first year that this strategy has been employed.

The Performance team will consider appropriate ways to penalise recitals that are over or under-length and how these might most transparently relate to the performance assessment criteria.

The School is already in the process of exploring the options of slightly later dates for next year's Assessment and Classification Board, in line with the comments about the amount of available time for markers to assess work. Such discussions have already been taking place in collaboration with the Examiner.

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:

It is particularly pleasing to note the Examiner's satisfaction with the assessment process, not least given the appointment of a new Assessment Lead this year. The School will in future be diligent to ensure that all draft examination papers are sent to the Examiner in good time following the School's internal exam paper scrutiny meetings.

Other comments

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

The School of Music was delighted to welcome the Examiner to the Student Expo event this year and to hear positive feedback about this event, which we believe is an excellent example of the ethos of the School and the Leeds Partnership in work given how student representatives and contributors so readily and proactively shape and participate in this event.