

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:	POLIS
Subject(s):	<i>International Development</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	International Development
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

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 BA International Development is an excellent programme in terms of both breadth and depth of material covered. Very contemporary topics.

Some innovative assignment formats, such as the policy briefing document and position paper in PIED3207 International Development and Social Policy, the project design for PIED2205 Development in Practice and policy briefing for PIED3206 The Politics of Aid. In particular, I think these innovative formats really help first class students to excel at the top end, and this excellent work is appropriately rewarded.

Use of voice comments for assessment feedback was used very successfully on several modules, and feedback provided in this way was clear, extensive and well thought out.

Use of electronic feedback works very well in general, and the widespread use of this is commendable.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

This is my first year as external examiner so cannot comment on this.

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

None

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 programme gives students a solid grounding in diverse aspects of International Development, in particular foregrounding the interconnections between the global North and global South in relation to global poverty and inequality. Over the course of the programme, students are equipped with the tools to critically analyse contemporary global development challenges through developing an understanding of the histories that shape contemporary patterns of global inequality, especially colonialism and its enduring legacies. The programme develops students' knowledge and understanding of theoretical, practical and policy-oriented aspects of International Development, and gives them opportunities to apply these in a variety of ways.

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)

Modules are taught by leading scholars and expose students to cutting edge research and debates in international development.

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
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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 / 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>At module level, module learning outcomes are not always clearly articulated, and these could be more visible in module documentation. Module guides generally refer to 'objectives' or 'aims' rather than learning outcomes and can be a bit woolly – e.g. 'by the end of this module you will be familiar with...', or a list of topics that will be covered. I would suggest that programme team think about being more consistent in their use of module learning outcomes and that these should be written in a way that emphasises what students will be able to do if they successfully complete the module. This would also enable a clearer articulation between MLOs and assessments.</p> <p>Assessment methods are varied and appropriate, and where assessment tasks are likely to be unfamiliar to students (e.g. policy briefing papers) they receive strong support and guidance to enable them to engage very well with the assignment tasks. This ensures that even less strong students are able to produce work that fits the assignment brief.</p> <p>The team might like to think about module specific assessment criteria as well as the generic assessment criteria, to give students further guidance on what is expected for particular assignments, and help align MLOs with assessments.</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>Overall the quality of student work is of a very high standard, with some exemplary work in the first class category. Work is certainly of comparable quality to other institutions and programmes.</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>Feedback to students is thorough, extensive and appropriate. Some module tutors specifically flag up 'feed-forward' advice which is very useful. Where feedback is provided as a block of free text it might be useful to use standard headings to enable students to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work. In relation to this, the rubric headings on Turn It In could be used more effectively.</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
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
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N
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

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

Where I raised queries I did not always get feedback as to the actions (if any) that would be taken – e.g. a query on an assessment brief (PIED3207), and a comment on one module (PIED2220) regarding possible lowering of first class marks (concurring with the internal moderator).

Other comments

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

In relation to the internal moderation process, this seems overall very thorough and consistent. However, it would be useful to know which scripts the internal moderator has looked at, and also I think there is scope to better record the dialogue between the marker and moderator. Particularly where the internal moderator suggests a change it would be good to document a bit more detail around the conversations that have taken place and any changes made as a result.

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

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	Education Social Science and Law, POLIS
Address for communication:	Woodhouse Lane Leeds, West Yorkshire LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

**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

We welcome these comments, especially the connection to the work at the top end where innovation is said to help first class students excel.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

None.

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:

None.

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:

None.

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:

We welcome these comments, especially the note that our students are exposed to cutting edge research and debates in international development.

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:

We note the constructive comments on the need to clarify module learning outcomes and the need for more consistent practice across the development team. We welcome the comment on the positive use of feed forward practices, encourage their use across the School, as well as the comment on the need to be more specific about the strengths and weaknesses. These comments will be passed on to the Global Development academic group leader to raise with specific tutors.

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:

Again, we welcome the specific comments related to PIED3207 and PIED2220. How these specific requests were communicated to module leaders/markers will be reviewed by the Academic Group Leader, Director of Student Education and the Assessments Support Team.

Other comments

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

How the dialogue between markers is conveyed to the external examiner is being reviewed at the level of the School Taught Student Education Committee.