

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:	SSP
Subject(s):	<i>Gender MA programmes</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	See below
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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.

Thank you to the administrators for their efficiency, timeliness and clarity of communication.

I examined the following Courses:

1. Que(e)rying Sexualities 5106M
2. Researching Gender- GEND 510M
3. Theorising Gender -GEND5102M
4. Contested Bodies—5108M
6. Dissertations

General Comments.

Overall, I found the work done by the students very interesting and stimulating and also the marking to be of a very high standard. I found the teaching materials in line with a postgraduate degree in gender studies. I agreed with all the marks.

Assessments

I find that there's a lot of expectation from students in terms of the length of assessed work they complete and in turn, the amount of assessment grading that the faculty do. Here I have in mind 6000 word essays for a half unit; research proposal +presentation grading+ book review for another course is a lot of work. I just wanted to mention the hard work done at both ends! And, in particular, I want to commend you on your dissertation feedback which is exemplary. I wonder if you might want to reduce the word limits for half unit assessments?

Marking I have a query and some general comments on the marking:

Process of agreeing marks:

I was not clear whether the marking was second sighted marking or double blind? In particular, I was unclear as to the process by which the first mark and the second mark was agreed. It would have been useful to have some indication of the process or a sentence or two on how the mark was agreed? This would be particularly pertinent in cases where the second marker recommended a lower mark or higher mark but the original mark was retained.

Marking criteria:

Although, the marking criteria is very clearly outlined but I wonder if it might help to have further gradations? Say 60-65, 65-69 as that might help in clarifying how the student marks were decided?

While it was clear to me how student marks at the top end and at the lower end –usually easier areas to grade—were arrived; however, in middling cases, where it is often difficult to grade without either being over generous or mean—such a disaggregation in the marking criteria might help?

Feedback

I really appreciated the first and second marker feedback—very thoughtful and precise—and I wondered if the students could get an amalgamated/synthesised version of these? I found that they received mostly the first marker comments but I do think they would benefit from both.

Reading Lists

And finally, I wanted to say that while all the course materials were very interesting and reflected on the field in thoughtful and stimulating ways, it would've been good to have some more transnational and diverse scholarship represented on the reading lists.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

NA

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

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y /
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	N
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y -- NA

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	NA
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	NA
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 / 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.

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)

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 /
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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.

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 /
<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>		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's 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:

Other comments

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

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:

DSE

SSP

SSP, Uni of Leeds

*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

We note the very positive comments about stimulating student work; programme coverage and the exemplary assessments and feedback

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

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:

No particular points were raised

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:

No particular points were raise but comments on the high standard of teaching and learning on the programmes in general observations

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:

offers positive commentary on assessment and feedback (including exemplary feedback on dissertations) and also raises some questions which I address here:

Regarding the question of whether we over-assess: we welcome this reflection which relates to our current School wide review of exactly this question. We will reflect on this further specifically in the context of the Gender programmes, particularly we will review the idea of reducing essay word count.

Second (check) marking is done and entails a second marker reading, marking and commenting upon a sample (of at least 20% and more where module size is small) of scripts. An amalgamated comment sheet is returned to each student, reflecting the final mark given. Comments and marks given by both the first and the check marker, agreed mark and the process by which this was arrived at are documented. We have revised the format through which this happens so that this should from now on be completely clear and transparent to external examiners.

Regarding the question about further gradations on marks: this is under review at a university level so we would expect to be guided by these wider discussions in evolving school wide policy.

In the 2017-18 academic session we have revised the Gender Studies MA programme. This has included an overhaul of Theorising Gender, including spreading it across two semesters. In planning and implementing this revision we have included a significant number of texts from non-Western authors, and we consider perspectives from post-colonial studies as well as drawing on work on intersectionality theory. As part of our commitment to valuing a broad range of views on gender within Gender Studies, and the University's wider internationalisation strategy, we will continue to revise across other modules as appropriate.

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:

No issues were raised

Other comments

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

No further issues were raised.

, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the School to thank you very much for all your work, your support and your constructive feedback which we value greatly.