

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 27/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Design
BA (HONS) Fashion Design

Programme(s) / Module(s):

CRN	Module Number	Module Name
16522	DESN1653	Research & Design Development
27496	DESN1658	Fashion Brand Analysis
24062	DESN1661	Garment Technology 1
16523	DESN2653	Design Development & Portfolio
26483	DESN2661	Garment Technology 2
27025	DESN3559	Fashion Innovation: R&A (Proj)
17823	DESN3563	Portfolio: Research & Analysis
17824	DESN3564	Portfolio: Design & Content
27027	DESN3568	Fashion Innovation: Product
19930	DESN3582	Fashion, Styling & Photography
30891	DESN3582	Fashion, Styling & Photography
27511	DESN3635	CAD & Prof Design Presentation
12257	DESN3660	Ind Study Dissertation

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 Fashion Innovation: Product (Negotiated Project) 20 Credit module contains work which has been carefully planned and executed. There a strong and positive focus on fashion technology within this module, and as a result the students gain a realistic insight into garment production methods. The work displays a strong understanding of garment manufacturing methodology. The work is detailed and analytical. There is evidence of some outstanding technical drawing combined with creative thinking. The outcomes are aimed at contemporary fashion companies which enable the students to produce imaginative work which is grounded in an understanding of technology. The garments are carefully costed, lay plans are produced, and the brand research is very thorough.

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 has been a substantial improvement to the Fashion Styling and Photography module since last year, the quality of the photography and the graphic layout is now at a professional standard.

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

I understand that there was high fail rate with our module DESN 1250 *Fundamentals of Imaging* this year. An investigation into the root of the problem might be beneficial before the next academic year.

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?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
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

New projects have been introduced this year, for example the second year Design Development & Portfolio Module focused on Vintage Research this year, the students were encouraged to investigate garments in the Fashion Archive within the University. They were able to investigate how vintage garments were constructed in minute detail. This research proved to be a valuable source of information for students studying complex manufacturing processes.

There are some very high marks, which reflect the quality of the work. One student won the Graduate Fashion Week Portfolio award, which reflects very well on the programme. This is not the first time this course has won this award, the quality of the portfolios is constantly very good indeed. The design work is very well thought through, the technical research underpinning the design process is rigorous. The layout is always of a truly professional standard.

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.*

The programme is well organised and structured with great care. The modules are well balanced and the students have a clear understanding of the programme they are studying. The aims and intended learning outcomes are carefully planned. An excellent learning environment is offered to the students. The curriculum is led by the needs of the industry, but at the same time the students are able to reach their full creative potential should they wish to do so.

The level of support for each individual is provided by committed professional lecturers who are constantly striving to improve and amend this outstanding course. The staff are knowledgeable about contemporary debates and rigorous in their delivery of the course.

Most of the students undertake a placement within the fashion industry which provides them with an invaluable insight into the business world. The placement enables them to contextualise their learning and helps to improve their personal skills. These graduates are very employable.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>Many of the staff are research active, and as result the students benefit from research informed and led teaching. The students are very well informed about the research process, they normally reference their sources with great care. The work is very analytical as a result of their understanding of the research process. Occasionally students use online resources for imagery which lacks academic rigour, where the original source of the image cannot be referenced, but generally there is an excellent level of academic rigour underpinning to the research. There is some evidence of outstanding design research as part of the Fashion Innovation Unit.</p> <p>The bulk of the written work is undertaken in (the aptly named) Independent Study (Dissertation) Unit, which provides the students with a sound understanding of academic writing. This written work is supervised by the fashion staff, each student is provided with thorough tutorial support and guidance. The students fully understand how to write in an academic manner, they investigate a topic of their own choice. The focus of most of the writing is contemporary debates, which successfully links to their design modules. The students should be complimented for their writing skills, they write about their design process and the research which underpins their design work articulately and fluently.</p> <p>The Reading Lists are comprehensive and appropriate to the level of study and the Module Handbook contain clear guidelines on referencing styles and links to online resources.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

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 assessment methods are very appropriate to the subject and the level of learning which is being undertaken. The students produce a full body of work which enables them to demonstrate their ability to meet the learning outcomes. The work is assessed through a series of projects/modules which enable the students to gain an understanding of the overall needs of the fashion industry from a design perspective. They learn how to translate their in-depth design work from 2D to 3D using complex technical skills and original ideas. The graduating students produce work to a commercial standard which is expected within the fashion industry. Their work is personal, and individual in the develop concepts which appropriate to the given brief. The strongest work produced by the most motivated students shows originality and resourcefulness combined with outstanding technical skills.</p> <p>The teaching is well planned and delivered with great care. A new Programme Leader started this year, has been successfully supported and mentored by the previous Programme Leader. is new to academia as was previously working within the fashion industry, a careful introduction to academic processes and procedures has been put in since September 2017. has settled in very well.</p> <p>The feedback provided to the students is clear methodical and linked to the learning outcomes. Feedback Tutorial Record Sheets are provided to the student, they sometimes contain instructive advice rather than</p>		

reflective feedback, it might be worth thinking about always summarising elements which have been produced successfully as part of the feedback process, sometimes the record sheet provides a list of actions to be taken.		
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>This was a strong cohort of students. The academic standard of the work produced is high. The work is analytical, selective and creative. The students perform well on the course, they have benefited from being taught by engaged and passionate staff. This cohort has produced work of a consistently high professional standard, their work compares very favourably other comparable 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>		

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
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?	NA
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?	NA
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>		

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 Examiner:

Subject(s):

BA Fashion Design

Programme(s) / Module(s):

CRN	Module Number	Module Name
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Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

School of Design

Address for communication:

School of Design
Clothworkers Central Building
University of Leeds
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 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 many positive comments, we were particularly pleased that you recognised the value of our focus on garment manufacturing methods and technologies. We were also very pleased with your comments that our DESN 3599 Fashion Innovation module is of a high standard and that the outcomes are detailed, analytical and contemporary focus.

We are also pleased that you appreciated how the research culture of the department impacted student education. Thank you.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We are happy that you have recognised the substantial improvement with the Fashion, Styling and Photography module and that you feel it is now of a professional standard. Thank you.

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:

Regarding your concern of the high fail rate of DESN1250, we have analysed failures. Some were down to non-submission of coursework or absence from the exam, however the largest proportion was from poor performance on the exam component. Students do find it difficult to adapt to their first university exam. Our Director of Student Education is reviewing this module and we anticipate significant change in teaching and assessment.

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:

Thank you for recognising our second year DESN2653 module with the introduction of Vintage research. We aim to continue this brief for the next academic year as we feel it helps students begin to creatively design with a free and less restricted approach.

Thank you for also recognising the very high standard of final year DESN3563 / DESN3564 portfolio research and design work and our students achievements at G.F.W.

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 are pleased you find our programme to be well organised, well-structured and the modules are well balanced and that we offer an excellent learning environment to our students.

We appreciate your recognition of the high level of support each individual is given by our committed team of lecturers.

Thank you for drawing attention to the difficulties students experience with sourcing and referencing images in an appropriately academic manner. The University library has introduced new resources to support this and we will be signposting these to our students. We will also ask our Academic Integrity Officer to consider how students might be introduced to referencing images through induction and their level 1 studies.

We are pleased you acknowledge the benefits of student's year in placement within the fashion industry and that it provides an invaluable insight into the business world.

Thank you very much for your positive comments about our handbooks.

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 are pleased you find that students produce a full body of work at all levels and that our students gain a clear understanding of the overall needs of the fashion industry from a design perspective.

We appreciate your acknowledging our new appointed Programme Leader and his support and mentoring from the previous Programme Leader has been successful.

We appreciate your comment regarding feedback and we will implement summarising elements which have been produced successfully as part of the feedback process.

We are pleased with your comments regarding that this year was a strong cohort of students and that the academic standard of work produced was very high. Thank you.

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 all of your favourable comments on The Progression and Awards Process.

Other comments

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

N/A