

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 26/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Design				
<i>Fashion Marketing</i>				
CRN	Module	Module Name	Credits	Semester
30376	DESN1355	Fashion Marketing	20	3
32311	DESN1375	Fashion in Context	20	3
25405	DESN2350	Marketing Creativity & Innovat	20	1
31767	DESN2365	Trends and Forecasting	20	3
32571	DESN2375	Fashion Promotions	20	3
33871	DESN2645	Design Theory	10	2
32574	DESN3360	Fashion Marketing Project	30	1
32575	DESN3370	Fashion Marketing-Realisation	30	2
30876	DESN3585	Collab Marketing and Promotion	20	3
12257	DESN3660	Ind Study Dissertation	40	3
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 inclusion of reflective writing and multiple presentations built into teaching delivery and assessment.
Industry involvement in feedback on students' business concepts.
Live industry project.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
Refocus of curriculum in the Trends and Forecasting unit.

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 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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y/
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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 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.

The course and wider team are to be commended for delivering a creative, industry-focused curriculum with opportunities for students to engage with live industry projects and current and future issues that influence the fashion industry and their future careers. There is evidence of continuous monitoring of the course offer by the Course Leader and the wider team and I endorse the minor changes to assignment topic and delivery and I will be interested to see how these are implemented when I visit next year.

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 Dissertation sample showed a very broad range of topics, including some sophisticated explorations of philosophy and cultural studies theory as well as literature more aligned with the discipline of marketing. The overall impression of the dissertation process is that students are given a broad choice of both topic and approach and supported in the development of research projects that align with their personal interests and career ambitions. As some of the units (not examined here) are delivered by the Business School it would be interesting to see collaborative research between the Business and Design School for both faculty and students.

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:

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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>Students have a variety of assessment methods: assessed presentations, reflective writing, research journals, marketing reports, exams, essays. It is good to see how reflective learning is incorporated and informs student work and as this practice is embedded throughout the teaching, it provides effective scaffolding and it is clear that students find it facilitative in terms of personal, academic and professional development. Assessment is thorough and there is evidence of extremely high level of work, which is further supported by the students' successes at Graduate Fashion Week. In most instances, feedback is clear, focused, individualised and supportive. In terms both of student and staff workload, it is noted that there is a heavy assessment and therefore marking load, with multiple assessment tasks and particularly with the final project work which consists of several extensive elements. We discussed a variety of ways in which this workload might be ameliorated for staff and students, whilst maintaining the strengths of the course.</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>The standard of work produced by the final year students is of a very high standard, as reflected in their attainment. The Fashion Marketing course demonstrates a high standard of visual literacy as would be expected of its situation within the Design School. This is demonstrated through both developmental and finished project work. The standard of written work is also high. Of note is the variety in terms of topic selection for projects and dissertations as well as an individualising of the curriculum that allows students to focus on areas of interest that align with their personal values, interests and career aspirations. An area for further development would be incorporating a wider range and more nuanced application of marketing theory and analysis in areas such as control and marketing KPIs to further support student outcomes.</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 grades are appropriate and in the overwhelming majority of cases the feedback is of an excellent quality and appropriate tone and quantity demonstrating high tutor engagement with teaching, assessment and feedback. The minor exceptions to this where feedback is brief and unspecific, might leave grading open to question. This was discussed with the Course Leader.</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?	Y /
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> With regards to grades, in some units the higher % marks could be given, in order to distinguish between students in the higher banding e.g. for 'extremely excellent'.</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 the Course Leader _____ and the team for making me so welcome and introducing me to the BA (Hons) Fashion Marketing course in my first year as External Examiner. As well as the final visit which coincided with the students' graduation exhibition, I was invited for an interim visit during which I met with two groups of students and viewed examples of work. Students were complimentary about the course, curriculum and work placement opportunities. They commended recent adaptations to the curriculum e.g. a revised trend unit.

Additionally, I attended Graduate Fashion Week 2018 and saw a selection of graduating students' work, which was very impressive. I was also able to speak with several of the graduating students about their experience on the course, their specific work and final year projects and their future plans.

The application of general marketing theory to the niche area of fashion marketing is well-developed across the levels. A particular strength is in the graphic element of the students' work. I recommend that this area is further supported with opportunities for staff development to keep abreast of current industry digital innovations and also by having more dedicated teaching and workshop support for graphic design and other digital elements which are vital for today's Fashion Marketing graduates.

It was noted in several students' reflective writing that strike action had been a concern.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Subject(s):

Programme(s) /
Module(s):*Design*

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

BA (Hons)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School
Design
School of Design, 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 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 very much for your visits and your support, we are delighted to have you on board as External Examiner.

We were particularly pleased to read your comments about teaching design and our engagement with industry. We encourage reflective practise and the sharing of ideas verbally to develop skills which are vital for future creatives but which students often struggle with initially. Industry specialists are used to bring the subject to life for the students, we find that they reinforce course content from a different perspective and enhance the understanding of the sector for both students and academics.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The changes to Trends and Forecasting were actually made the previous year in 2016/17. Final Year comprises of 3rd and 4th year students (those who have moved directly to final year and those who have taken a year in

industry/abroad), therefore some had taken the 'old' version before the modifications. Although the changes were felt to be good, there was dissatisfaction for those who felt they had been disadvantaged. All the final year students next year will have taken the 'new' version, so hopefully this dissatisfaction will not occur again.

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:

We were glad to read that the administrative arrangements were all satisfactory.

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:

Thank you for your comments about the value of industrial experience and live briefs. The live project in the Collaborative Marketing Project is very popular. We are also hoping to introduce a level 2 industrial collaboration in 1819.

Following our discussions about;

- Focusing more on communications at level 2, potentially from a global perspective
- Reduction in the printed element of research at level 3.

These have been discussed and changes to Module handbooks are in progress.

Thank you for the suggestion relating to collaborative research with LUBS for staff and students; the programme does not currently include any modules delivered by the Business School, however, joint research is certainly an area that we will consider for the future.

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 comments about the high standard of work produced by our students.

Regarding the heavy workload and assessment burden, changes to the output have been discussed with the teaching team and will be written into the module handbooks. The research journal, which as a creative and exploratory document (similar to a sketch book), had an unlimited word count. We will be limiting this in future and producing clear guidelines about what should be included.

In line with the University's commitment to streamlining assessment we will be working with the Director of Student Education to identify other areas for improvement.

Thank you for your comments about our usual high standard of feedback. Thank you also for drawing our attention to a couple of cases where this standard had not been met. We have identified that some assessment feedback was missing from Minerva due to a technical glitch. The student affected has been contacted and their feedback sent by email.

The brief/generic feedback you flagged up has been brought to the attention of the module manager. The Director of Student Education is working with the entire staff team to ensure a consistently high standard of feedback across all modules.

In response to your suggestion that we should incorporate a wider range and more nuanced application of marketing theory and analysis, in areas such as control and marketing KPIs; we have placed more

emphasis on marketing theory and metrics in both the second and final year fashion marketing modules to further support student outcomes.

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 raising the point that we are not utilising the full range of marks at the higher end of the scale. This may be a legacy from the previous compressed (20-90) marking scale. As we now mark from 0-100, we need to reflect upon our practice to ensure that exceptional students are identified appropriately. I will raise this with the marking team and across the School more widely.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your comments about the strength of the graphic elements of our students' work. This is an area that we aim to develop further. To this end, in the 2018/19 academic year, we have organised additional taught and drop-in sessions to support students' graphic design and digital skills, and have provided the final year students with tutorial support for graphic design. We have appointed a new lecturer in digital marketing, and teaching staff have had the opportunity to attend InDesign refresher sessions.

We understand that the strike action earlier in the year was a concern for students. We did our utmost to minimise disruption and we hope that there will be no reoccurrence this year.

Finally, can we reaffirm how very pleased we are to have _____ as our external examiner. _____ subject expertise, knowledge of HE, combined with _____ experience of industry practice have been invaluable. I look forward to welcoming _____ back to Leeds for _____ interim visit in early 2019.