

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18      QAT Received 19/06/2018

**Part A: General Information**

**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	School of Design
Subject(s):	<i>Textile Design</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	DESN1175 Green Design DESN1560 Design for Textiles 1B DESN1561 Design for Textiles 1C DESN1575 Patterns and Culture DESN1633 Colour and the Design Process DESN1820 Design History: 1900 to the Present Day DESN2170 Knitted Fabric Tech for Design DESN2180 Garment Tech for Knitwear DESN2564 Design for Textiles 2A DESN2565 Design for Textiles: Specialism DESN2633 Colour: Art and Science DESN3342 Visual Research & Analysis DESN3343 Critical Studio Journal DESN3566 Design for Textiles 3 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 students positively commented on the attention to their pastoral care and academic support (provided by the course team) when I met at both the interim and final visits. Students in the 2017-18 cohort are producing very professional portfolios of commercial design collections (especially on the digital design route) that should give them the opportunities to secure employment opportunities in the creative sector.

DESN1561 – Module handbook is very well structured and user friendly. Clearly structured schedule and homework for each week are a welcome addition – as is the breakdown of self-directed and contact hours and what this equates to per week.

DESN1633 - Addition of a section in the Module Handbook entitled *Employability Skills* and 'why you should study this' – is well thought out and helpful to student users.

DESN1575 – Use of VLE to monitor student engagement during the semester using a journal entry task, is to be applauded and a good way to keep track of the 95 students who studied this module. Key to identifying Year 1 students who are struggling.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

New addition to the technician teams or enhanced technician support for workshops facilities including laser cutting and knit (Shima) have directly contributed to the breadth and quality of work that was produced for submission for Module DESN3566. Examples included several students producing garments (knitwear) and students creating mixed media pieces using the laser cutter and digital print.

The organisation and opportunity for digital printing on fabric substrates at the early stage of the Major Project DESN3566 has seen some much needed improvement.

**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 / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses 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 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 programme structure enables students the opportunity to personalise their journey and many commented on this aspect as a reason for choosing the course at Leeds. The design of the course is well suited to those students who want to explore the various career options available in the textile industry and the mix of modules equips them for this. Students who I met were considering careers in fabric buying, advertising, teaching, textile design; styling and several are applying for postgraduate courses. The specialism routes and the support from associated specialist staff needs to be considered in order to effectively deliver the options relating to weave and embroidery as currently these areas are insufficiently supported.

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)

The dissertation module is well designed and there were some high levels of attainment on this module. The research skills they develop with support from staff aligned to their subject, allows students to develop topics that could also have an impact on their design projects, and ultimately their ambition to continue their research through to an MA qualification. Students demonstrated a very good understanding of how to apply a range of methodologies to their topic and what mechanisms to employ for primary research. Support work submitted for the Design for Textiles 3 (DESN3566) evidences that students are starting to make connections between their research (and or dissertation) and their practice. The more successful students demonstrate originality in their projects and clear commercial outcomes, backed up in-depth research on current topics pertinent to the textile industry.

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> <p>As noted in the previous section student research skills and critical enquiry is developed to a level that prepares them for further study at Masters or PhD level</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 varied and appropriate to the course where students are assessed through a mix of exams and course work. More theoretical modules that mix these assessment methods (DESN2633, DES2180) enable students to achieve their potential with 55% of students achieving &gt;60% in DESN2180. Modules specific to design and fabric development require multiple components to be submitted (as is the norm in the sector) and this mix of written, sketchbook, technical notes and design work has produced an excellent set of results for the 28 students on Textile Design with 32% students achieving a grade of &gt;70% and 61% achieving between 60-69%. This module successfully brings together their previous learning from modules at Year 1 and Year 2 and allows students to build on the skills they have as a result of detailed feedback (formative in tutorials and summative).</p> <p>Assessment criteria are in line with the learning outcomes and the briefs set these out clearly for the student in a logical manner. Feedback is consistent across all modules and clearly directs the student as to where they might improve in future submissions. DESN1633 as an example uses a mix of standard feedback comment with specific notes for each student. Essays are also marked up with comments inserted in the text. Feedback for design briefs (DESN1561) is detailed and comments are aligned to each aspect of the projects submitted. Expectations for what students should achieve for each grade profile were provided in modules including DSN1663.</p> <p>Exam paper samples provided for DESN1633, DESN1175, DESN1575 and DESN2633 used different approaches to marking up scripts (some included brief comments, some not) and it would be preferable to adopt a common approach to this type of feedback if students are to see their exam scripts after marking.</p> <p>Examples of reports in DSN2180 demonstrated a good level of knowledge in garment technology for knitwear and excellent use of illustrations to support answers in the exam papers.</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 range of outcomes for the digital print specialists in DESN 3566 was more diverse than those seen in last year's cohort and it was encouraging to see them apply their designs to a broad range of substrates. Lengths produced successfully reproduced the colours of samples they were derived from, but a number of students had commissioned pieces externally in order to print onto a wider range of materials. As much as many designs were enhanced by through printing onto leather, velvets, crepe and other substrates, the high costs to students using such digital print services is a concern. Does this disadvantage financially poorer students?</p> <p>Innovation in structures and pursuit of new ideas in garment construction were evident in the knit specialists submissions. These students complemented the support from both their tutors and the technician for this area. Students who pushed themselves to</p>		

produce garments would like more support to achieve this type of end result, but this is not a requirement of the course and students are expected to be self-directed in this respect. Academic standards are comparable to students at other institutions and this cohort demonstrated a clear strength in both the rigour of their research and the attainment of excellent grades for their dissertation submission. Presentation of final collections is very professional and design outcomes well considered in the short time frame that they have, but further variety of outcomes and help to present their work in other formats, and contexts could be encouraged.

*Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:*

DSN3660 Dissertation - topics are decided in Year 2 before the placement year. I would suggest that students are given the opportunity for support from staff if they wish to change topic as a result of their year out, a year when many students develop a maturity in their studies, better understanding of the industry and interests in topics pertinent to the textiles and fashion.

### 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

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

I received samples of exam questions in advance for all modules. The arrangements for me to meet all students at both visits were invaluable and provided me with detailed insight into the student experience and to understand their career ambitions on graduation. The majority of exam scripts were annotated (see previous note).

### Other comments

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

Suggestions for improvement from students were focused on their design studies and workshop content/teaching. These include getting more digital fabric printing experience in Year 2 to enable them to better understand how colour and drawn marks change on different substrates. Some module content on technical properties of materials was identified as missing from the curriculum (beyond that taught in knit) but some students had felt they had picked up enough knowledge on placement.

Digital students have produced excellent collections of well-developed designs and colourways, but I would also encourage them to take more risk to push the boundaries of their specialism (through drawing and or mixed media, plus engagement with new technologies). Digital students expressed a wish to have studio space so that they could develop more of a community of practitioners (which they perceive the knitters to have in the knit workshop), this could create energy around design innovation, risk-taking and create healthy competition amongst students.

It was particularly noted that the print tutor has been very supportive and encouraging the students to help themselves to make considered decisions regarding design direction. The staffing levels for the course are a concern as staff members who have left have not been replaced and support for students/admin of the course as well as the breadth of subject specialists has been affected. The significant additional workload that the Course Leader has diligently taken on is testament to her dedication to the course but is this sustainable in the long run?

## Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Subject(s):	Textile Design
Programme(s) / Module(s):	DESN1175 Green Design DESN1560 Design for Textiles 1B DESN1561 Design for Textiles 1C DESN1575 Patterns and Culture DESN1633 Colour and the Design Process DESN1820 Design History: 1900 to the Present Day DESN2170 Knitted Fabric Tech for Design DESN2180 Garment Tech for Knitwear DESN2564 Design for Textiles 2A DESN2565 Design for Textiles: Specialism DESN2633 Colour: Art and Science DESN3342 Visual Research & Analysis DESN3343 Critical Studio Journal DESN3566 Design for Textiles 3 DESN3660 Ind Study Dissertation
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA
Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	Design
Address for communication:	School of Design, University of Leeds, 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](mailto: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 helpful and insightful comments. We appreciate your continued support this year.

It was particularly pleasing that the students commented positively on their pastoral care and academic support as the reduction in staffing on the programme could have had a negative impact on student experience without the additional effort provided by the teaching team.

Thank you also for your comments on the module documentation, the BA Textile Design module handbooks were re-written to provide additional information to students and to provide a unified format for module documentation across all three years of the taught programme.

It is hoped that the format of weekly journal entry in DESN 1575, which is a useful tool to monitor student engagement and act as a revision aid can be adopted in some form by DESN 2170 Knitted Fabric Technology for Designers and DESN 2180 Garment Technology for Knitwear.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

We constantly strive to improve the student experience and the addition of high quality technical support, particularly in Knit and Laser Cutting has been noted by the teaching team. Both technicians work well with the teaching staff to assist in the delivery of a high quality design education. We view this as a partnership between students, teaching staff and technical staff.

Whilst not a knitwear course, it is useful for students to contextualise their work in product and we will develop this further offering more classes on garment construction. This will complement the first cohort of students reaching their final year who have had the opportunity to study DESN 2170 Knitted Fabric Technology for Designers and DESN 2180 Garment Technology for Knitwear.

We plan to further develop the opportunities for students to digitally print on to fabric and have set up a training day with Epson Printers for level two students in Semester One, so that they understand the technical requirements for a digital print earlier in their education. This should see results in 19/20 and 20/21. From 17/18 level one students have had a more rigorous introduction to textile technology including materials.

**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:*

NA

**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:*

NA

**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 flexibility of the course design and opportunities our students have to develop their research skills.

Breadth of education is important to the University of Leeds but it is also important that we ensure a high quality of specialist teaching and equipment. The lack of space this year meant that some equipment for example the sewing machines and embellisher were not readily available to students. It has also been noted that whilst the provision of technical support for knit has improved, this was at the detriment to technical support for stitch. We seek to utilise technical support for digital embroidery from other areas in the School and widen student experience of stitch technique and use through visiting speakers. Stitch remains an option that appears to be chosen by either very strong or by very weak students.

Weave provision is being reviewed for re-introduction to level one following the format of other specialist areas, knit, repeat pattern and stich, with more technical input and more focus on material use and fabric production.

Students on Textile Design produced high quality dissertations this year with a Textile Design student winning the Foster Prize for the best undergraduate dissertation. All of the Textile Design teaching team are active researchers with a wide range of interests and this impacts on the support they offer to students and the ambition they generate in student dissertation proposals. The use of a wider range of research methodologies has led to a closer connection between research and practice. We continue to develop this link and students are given the opportunity to change the direction of their dissertations in initial supervision meetings.

**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 assessment design and the clarity of briefs. We were also pleased to see you recognise the success of our graduating cohort.

We continue to work towards improving assessment and feedback to students. This year we focussed on advice to students about how responding to feedback can improve learning opportunities rather than being an end point in itself. This has allowed students to further develop their critical thinking skills and the impact of this can be seen in the range of outcomes presented for assessment. In answer to your concerns about examination feedback, students are invited to view their exam scripts after assessment but the take up is very low. This may be because examination is more common in optional modules. Unification of feedback methods in these types of assessments is difficult without adding to the teaching staff's assessment load but this could be discussed further in the School Taught Student Education committee.

Students are given the opportunity to amend or change their dissertation topic entirely before returning from industry. Many students do take advantage of this opportunity before their first meeting with their supervisor. This process will be codified and made more accessible to students.

In the 18/19 academic year all students will be encouraged to produce a professional portfolio of outcomes as well as "catwalk" pieces for the end of year show and New Designers. Unfortunately current staffing levels do not allow for any additional staff workload.

Cost of materials continues to be a concern and we will review our provision of substrates for final year printing.

## 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:*

We were delighted with the high quality of work produced by our students this year and were pleased that the rigour of our progression and awards process was noted.

## Other comments

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

We have planned to increase fabric printing in level two and have organised additional training for these students in the technical aspects of printing in conjunction with Epson. This cohort has also had an enhanced introduction to textiles technology and materials in level one.

For Digital Specialists, we have blocked times in one of our studios explicitly for this group to allow them space and opportunity to work together.

We noted your concerns about staffing levels for the programme, we have shared your comments with the Head of School. In the 18/19 academic year an additional member of staff will teach on DESN 1560.

Thank you again for the support that you have offered our students and the teaching team this year.