

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QA Team received 20/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Fine Art History of Art and Cultural Studies

Subject(s):

Museum/Gallery Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BA Art Gallery and Museum Studies

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.
 This year I was particularly impressed by marking, double marking and feedback processes on dissertations – the reasons for the final mark were exceptionally clear for the external examiner, and the feedback given to students was very full and 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.
 The 'external examiner' tab on the VLE allows for a much more streamlined and efficient way to review assessment, achievement and feedback. In general there is improved use and consistency in use of the VLE.

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 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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The programme has not changed significantly from last year when I commended it on its blend of traditional critical analytical focus and intellectual rigour with more directly professional curatorial skills.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<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>There are examples of students undertaking research (e.g. on country house module); and in general all modules derive from staff research (increasingly so in later years of programme). See my comments on last two reports.</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 programme continues to be assessed through a variety of methods which allows students to develop and be tested on a variety of skills including but going beyond traditional essays and exam writing. The use of tasks demanding writing for different audiences continues to be a strength of the programme. The programme team might consider diversifying the assessment methods still further to include digital tools to enhance employability.</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>As in previous years I was responsible for a programme with a small number of students and it's not very helpful to comment on standards and performance of such a small number. The cohort continues to be solid but not brilliant in achievement – there is evidence of hard work, good writing skills and some flair for the more curatorial work.</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>As in previous years I felt that examining a programme where students' option choices were so diverse across the school made it hard to be sure that all work had enough scrutiny though I appreciate that the school's external examiners as a team are looking at all the work. There is still inconsistency in use of the VLE which is an inevitable part of the move towards online marking; but I would urge the school to move towards more standardisation where possible, especially with making sure the second marking or moderation process is always fully documented.</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?	N
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></p>		

Although I did not approve any assessment questions at draft stage I have no concerns about the questions and tasks set based on previous years' experience – they have always been consistently appropriate, clear and challenging.

Other comments

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

In the work I saw this year I saw a much more consistent understanding and use of the first class bands (70-79, 80-89 etc). However, discussion at the board suggested there are still concerns among the school itself and potentially different understandings of its use and it would be useful for the school to make sure this is discussed and more consistency assured here.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Museum/Gallery Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BA Art History with Museum Studies/Art Gallery & Museum Studies

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

BA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

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 note the positive comments on good practice for assessment and student feedback of dissertations and the increasing use of and engagement with the VLE.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We are pleased to note that the development of the 'external examiner' tab on the VLE was positively received.

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 thank the external examiner for their careful and considered comments on the programme and are pleased to note that our continual refinements to existing processes, where needed, and our innovations to the programme were received so positively.

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 to note that the examiner considered that many of the modules, especially in the later years of the programme when students are working towards their final research-driven dissertation project, were so well informed by staff research interests.

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 were pleased to note that the examiner considered that there continued to be a good range and variety of assessment models throughout the programme modules; the suggestion for more diverse assessments, especially in the use of digital tools, is something that the programme team and the school more generally are constantly seeking to incorporate into module assessments; there is an increasingly diverse use of digital assessment in several modules in other programmes in the school and we are working towards adoption, where appropriate, of these modes of assessment in the programme.

We note that the examiner considered that our move towards more consistent use of the VLE for assessment was progressing very well, but there was still some room for some further standardisation and consistency in process and documentation in assessment; we continue to move towards standardisation of assessment processes on the VLE as we refine our module content and assessment processes and will discuss this further with the programme team.

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 are pleased to note that the examiner has responded so positively to our increasingly use of the full range of marks in the 1st class category for assessment; our internal processes of sharing perspectives on the thresholds and parameters for assessment are constantly discussed and debated, especially at School Education Away Days, and we are confident that these opportunities for shared perspectives with only further increase our consistency and engagement with assessment and progression.

Other comments

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

We would like to thank our examiner for the very positive response to our programme and for the thoughtful and very helpful observations and comments in her external examination report.