

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 18/10/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science

Subject(s):

History and Philosophy of Science

Programme(s) / Module(s):

HPSC2150, HSPC2400, HSPC3200, HPSC1030, HSPC1045, HSPC1050

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

BA, BSc

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Innovation:

Alongside traditional forms of assessment, some new and innovative forms of assessment such as blogging gives students the opportunity to improve their ability to communicate to wider audiences.

Good Practice:

The feedback for students remains at a very high standard and well-presented so that students clearly understand the reason for their marks.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Exam paper approval meeting ensured greater consistency in exams.

Cross module marking comparisons

Streamlining Exam Board

Matters for Urgent Attention

N/A

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

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

This course is comparable with other programmes and provides an interesting and varied range of courses.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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The course content is research driven, and also influenced by the potential interests of students. The History of Science in Ten Objects offers students an innovative way to conceptualise the history of science and explore wider understandings using the object as a starting point.

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:

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
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The modules clearly link learning outcomes with methods of assessment. The two main forms of assessment, essays and exams, are familiar to students and they were able to undertake other forms of assessment such as blogging – a process which students undertook very enthusiastically. The course outlines were clear and on-line material provided further details so the students were well informed about what skills and learning outcomes each course would provide.

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>Overall, the student's work was of a high standard. Many of them demonstrated improvement throughout the course, and obviously enjoyed the topics on offer- essay topics were enthusiastically undertaken, and when asked to provide feedback on one course, students engaged wholeheartedly with the process. Students engaged well across a range of assessment. Many of students wrote clearly and many possessed a high level of skill in analysis, probably higher quality than in some other institutions.</i></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?	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>The process was extremely effectively administered. This year the Exam Board was streamlined, yet all information was provided and I clearly understood the rationale behind special circumstances and other criteria. I was able to examine a full range of work so I feel confident in my evaluation. All work was clearly marked and I had access to both examiner's reports. There were some issues with access to the electronic systems, (trouble with last year's passwords) but the School made provision for work to be examined.</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):

History and Philosophy of Science

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BA History and Philosophy of Science (plus associated Joint Honours programmes)

HPSC2150, HSPC2400, HSPC3200, HPSC1030, HSPC1045, HSPC1050

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

BA, BSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Assessment Officer

Faculty / School of:

School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science

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 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 are pleased to hear that our efforts to diversify the School's range of assessment methods, including the use of online blogs/logs, are proving successful and that our provision of feedback on students' assessments continues to be of a high standard.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

It is reassuring to hear that the exam paper approval meetings are assisting with issues of consistency and that our cross-module marking comparisons are of use. We continue to look for ways of making the Exam Board and other aspects of our examining procedures as efficient as possible.

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:

We are pleased that there are no matters requiring urgent attention.

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:

N/A

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 glad that there are no concerns in connection with the standards that apply to the History and Philosophy of Science programme (and its associated Joint Honours combinations).

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:

Again, it is gratifying to hear that our assessment and feedback procedures are sufficiently varied and thorough, and that students are demonstrating not only a high level of capability but also considerable enthusiasm for the subjects they are studying.

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 greatly appreciate your participation in the Exam Board and are pleased that it ran smoothly in June 2018. The issue with enabling External Examiners to access the Virtual Learning Environment has not yet been resolved, but we are working on it. The problem seems to be that a new security procedure has been implemented which requires anyone who wishes to access the VLE to pass a short online Information Security test. We shall keep our External Examiners informed about this matter.

Other comments

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

Thank you once again for your extremely helpful and encouraging comments.