

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-2018 QAT Received 03/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Arts, School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
Subject(s):	<i>Religious Studies and combinations</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA Theology and Religious Studies THEO2251 – Sociology of Religion (20 credits) THEO3190 – Religions and Global Development (20 credits) THEO3390 – Philosophy and the Spiritual Life (20 credits) THEO1920 – Religion, Politics & Society in the Modern World (10 credits) THEO1930 – Introduction to the Study of Religions (10 credits) THEO1960 – Religion in Modern Britain (10 credits) THEO101501 – Introduction to the Study of Islam (10 credits) THEO190001 – Introduction to South Asian Religions (10 credits) THEO191001 – Religion in Modern Africa (10 credits) THEO192009 – Religion, Politics and Society in the Modern World (10 credits) (16/17 resit) THEO2201 – Hindu Traditions to 1600 CE (20 credits) THEO3306 – Hindu Traditions to 1600 CE (20 credits) THEO3021 – Muslims in Britain: Transnational Communities and Multicultural Politics (20 credits) THEO2000 – TRS Students into Schools (20 Credits) THEO2720 - Religion, Gender and Society (20 Credits) PRHS3000 – Integrated Research Project THEO2300 - Studying Religion in Context (20 credits) THEO2450 - A Key Thinker in Philosophy of Religion: In Dialogue
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:

Institution:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Quality Assurance**
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

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

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

There are no matters for urgent attention

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

NA

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

NA

Standards

1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award

- *The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

This programme, its combinations and the modules I examined are effectively designed to meet the learning outcomes appropriate for levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Framework for Higher Education qualifications

2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Yes, the programme learning outcomes effectively meet the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies (Oct 2014).

3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *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.*

The assessment methods used in each of the modules are appropriate both to the content and level of the module.

The assessment design within each module and overall assessment strategy are appropriate to undergraduate studies in this subject area.

As noted in previous years, there is greater use of examinations than in other similar courses, and it would be worth the team considering introducing alternative forms of assessment.

4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *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.*

Student achievement in assignments was commensurate with their abilities and it was pleasing to note a number of very good pieces of work.

Overall students are achieving at levels that are commensurate with other courses with which I am familiar.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

NA

6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

One aspect of the oversight of assessment within the programme that is was positive to see enhanced is the increased clarity regarding monitoring reports, with amended wording for the *Code of Practice*.

7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

Staff teaching the course are all engaged in research and it is clear that modules are underpinned both by research rigour and currency across the discipline.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

NA

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

9. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

NA

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.

Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.

The guidance to EEs is sound. The External Examiner's Handbook is concise and very clear.

There were some problems accessing all the student assignments because access to the VLE was limited. However, sufficient hard copy samples were provided for me to undertake my role. I hope that, in future, full access to all student submissions and the linked marking and commentary in Grademark is available for all EEs.

11. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?

The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.

Yes.

12. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Yes, questions are sent in good time and my comments and suggestions for enhancement are taken into account.

13. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

Yes. I was provided with samples by hard copy in advance of the meeting, and was able to examine further scripts and examinations in the day prior to the meeting.

14. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Yes.

15. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

I attended the meeting and was happy to confirm all decisions and grades. The process was clear, and the University regulations underpinning decisions were clearly explained.

16. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?

Decisions were made and a pre-board meeting that involved one of the examining team, which is an appropriate process.

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):

Theology and Religious Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BA Theology and Religious Studies (plus associated Joint Honours programmes)

THEO2251 Sociology of Religion (20 credits)
 THEO3190 Religions and Global Development (20 credits)
 THEO3390 Philosophy and the Spiritual Life (20 credits)
 THEO1920 Religion, Politics & Society in the Modern World (10 credits)
 THEO1930 Introduction to the Study of Religions (10 credits)
 THEO1960 Religion in Modern Britain (10 credits)
 THEO101501 Introduction to the Study of Islam (10 credits)
 THEO190001 Introduction to South Asian Religions (10 credits)
 THEO191001 Religion in Modern Africa (10 credits)
 THEO192009 Religion, Politics and Society in the Modern World (10 credits) (16/17 resit)
 THEO2201 Hindu Traditions (20 credits)
 THEO3306 Hindu Traditions (20 credits)
 THEO3021 Muslims in Britain: Transnational Communities and Multicultural Politics (20 credits)
 THEO2000 TRS Students into Schools (20 Credits)
 THEO2720 Religion, Gender and Society (20 Credits)
 PRHS3000 Independent Research Project
 THEO2300 Studying Religion in Context (20 credits)
 THEO2450 A Key Thinker in Philosophy of Religion: In Dialogue

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

BA

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.

10 October 2018

Dear

Thank you very much for submitting your External Examiner's Report for the Academic Year 2017–18. As ever, we greatly appreciate the careful attention that you have given to our Theology and Religious Studies programme and to a large number of modules associated with it.

We are pleased to see that there are no matters requiring urgent attention and that, for the most part, our assessment processes and standards are satisfactory.

We take note of your observation (under Question 3) that examinations feature prominently among the methods of assessment used across our range of modules taken as a whole. While the variety of methods of assessment utilized within the School has increased over recent years, we continue to regard examinations as one effective method among others. We shall, however, keep the use of examinations under review – along with all our methods of assessment – within the overall process of reviewing our modules and programmes.

The hope expressed (under Question 10) that External Examiners will, in future, be given full access to the VLE for all the modules for which they are responsible is one that we share. My understanding of the situation is that a new online Information Security test has been introduced that must be passed by anyone who is going to receive access to the VLE. I shall consult relevant administrative colleagues about this matter to see whether there is any means of bypassing this requirement. If there is not, then I fear that External Examiners will be asked to complete the test prior to being granted access. I apologise for this inconvenience.

May I also add that, through its School Taught Student Education Committee (STSEC), the School of PRHS is currently undertaking a review both of the way in which materials are made available to External Examiners and of the instructions that External Examiners are given in connection with the sampling of assessed work. The purpose of this review is to ensure that External Examiners' time and effort can be used in a maximally efficient way. It is, in part, your own suggestions concerning the virtues of introducing a more 'risk-based approach' to External Examining that has prompted this review. We hope that the review will not take long and that any beneficial modifications in our procedures can be implemented during the current academic year (2018–19).

With gratitude once again,

Yours sincerely,

(Assessment Officer, on behalf of the Head of School)