

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 04/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Politics and International Studies

Subject(s):

International Relations/Politics/EU

Programme(s) / Module(s):

ED2160 Spin Doctors and Electioneering; PIED2301 Politics and Policy in the EU; PIED2721 Approaches to Analysis; PIED3158 British Foreign Policy; PIED3202 Land, Fuel and Agriculture; PIED3310 Britain and the EU; PIED3325 Europe in the World; PIED3405 Israel: Politics and Society; PIED3407 Israel: Politics and Society; PIED3750 UG Dissertation PIED8800 POLIS Industrial Placement

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

Feedback on both summative and formative assessment is outstanding Student engagement and development of professional skills (especially through placements) continues to be a notable programme feature.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Provision of anonymised data on extenuating circumstances is most welcome and improved use of VLE.

Matters for Urgent Attention

none

For Examiners in the first year of appointment *NOT APPLICABLE*

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 *NOT APPLICABLE*

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)?	
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
<i>I continue to be impressed with the commitment of colleagues to support student learning and professional development and the consistency and rigour of marking. The moderation process in particular is robust and exemplary</i>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
Research linkages to teaching are evident in the range of modules offered and their engagement with substantive issues. In feedback, comments regularly refer to research-based content delivered in the classroom.		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
Learning outcomes are visible in both programme design and in range, construction and assessment of modules. These combine to focus on critical thinking skills, active engagement and the development of practice-based professional skills.		
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
Student performance is very strong indeed – exceptional at the top end clearly comparable with other institutions of which I have experience. The mid range and lower range performance of students is also solid and comparable. Strengths of the student body's performance is illustrated in the range of degree classification.		

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

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:

Other comments

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

1) the notification of extenuating circumstances to Externals is most welcome. While not directly engaged in decision making it is helpful to see the run and range of decisions made

2) whether just by chance or not, I saw two extraordinary extremes of examples of moderation. In the first. the moderation amounted to a series of near single word statements eg 'fine' against the various categories of analysis. In the second there was some extraordinary micromanagement of marking. This latter included a query as to why there were not *more* borderline cases at the various classification thresholds. The implication appeared to be a suspicion that the markers were avoiding such borderline cases and the moderator wanted a specification of the difference between say a 68 and a 69. I'd strongly suggest that the school sit down and remind one another what is sought from your moderation process and restate guidelines as to what is and what is not required therein

3) I would raise again a query as to the utility and opportunity costs of offering detailed commentary on final year exams. Of course students should have access to reasons for their final grade but more detailed exposition on how to improve etc., still appears to me to be wholly redundant. You already go to extraordinary lengths in terms of feed back and feed forward (!)

4) overall student performance is excellent and well within the range of my own experience. You make full use of the entire range of available marks and while this is very generous in my experience, I understand this to be within the norms of the university. It is however an issue to which there should be ongoing attention paid.

5) the administration of the exam and moderation processes is superlative... with some niggling issues as regards External access to Minerva system and superfluous demands that externals engage in training.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

As stated above

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

ESSL / POLIS

Address for communication:

University of Leeds

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

Feedback on both summative and formative assessment is outstanding Student engagement and development of professional skills (especially through placements) continues to be a notable programme feature.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We thank _____ for this.

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:

None.

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 welcome the comment “I continue to be impressed with the commitment of colleagues to support student learning and professional development and the consistency and rigour of marking. The moderation process in particular is robust and exemplary”

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 welcome the comment “Research linkages to teaching are evident in the range of modules offered and their engagement with substantive issues. In feedback, comments regularly refer to research-based content delivered in the classroom”

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 welcome the comment: “Learning outcomes are visible in both programme design and in range, construction and assessment of modules. These combine to focus on critical thinking skills, active engagement and the development of practice-based professional skills.”

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:

None.

Other comments

Response to items included in the ‘Other Comments’ section of the report

We particularly value the comment: “I’d strongly suggest that the school sit down and remind one another what is sought from your moderation process and restate guidelines as to what is and what is not required therein”. This will be done prior to the next assessment period.”

“a query as to the utility and opportunity costs of offering detailed commentary on final year exams. Of course students should have access to reasons for their final grade but more detailed exposition on how to improve etc., still appears to me to be wholly redundant.” On this, take the view that the student’s learning experience is ongoing and our feedback is also a means of justifying the mark.