

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 02/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Design

Subject(s):

Fashion Technology

Programme(s) / Module(s):

DESN1467: Intro to Fashion Technology; DESN1468: Garment Production Processes; DESN1830: Technologies for Art & Design; DESN2285: Research Methods 1; DESN2295: Research Methods 2; DESN2467: Fashion Technology for Production Development; DESN2468: Advanced Fashion Technology; DESN2469: Fashion Management; DESN2500: Eco-Design & Global Ecology; DESN2525: Design for Sports Clothing; DESN2615: Design Management and Trends; DESN3660: Ind. Study Dissertation.

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

BA (Hons) Fashion Technology

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 availability of sample reports coupled with detailed feedback on an initial outline has led to the generation of particularly good technical reports by the undergraduates on the programme.

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 on-line submission of most written assignments enables thorough appraisal of students' coursework.

Also, the new provision of Lectra Kaledo design and Lectra Modaris drafting facilities, as encouraged in last year's report, will make the students familiar with internationally-used design software, and will enhance their employment prospects.

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

The Fashion Technology programme was newly implemented when my appointment commenced; it was well planned with a good balance of practical and theoretical work. In my experience, this combination helps students to come to terms with the problems inherent in managing an industry which utilises a wide range of machinery, advanced technical knowledge and which harnesses a workforce which is predominantly located remotely from the design and retail hubs. As such, significant changes have not been necessary and the programme has needed only minor refinement.

A major objective with such a programme is that of getting textile design students to appreciate that the success of their future professional work will depend on them successfully harnessing modern technical innovations into their creative work. The fact that they are able to write good scientific reports indicates that they have grasped the importance of the technical aspects of the products and techniques that they are working with and they thoroughly understand how they may be exploited.

The development of good laboratory practice and the appropriate use of testing procedures are clear from the students' written submissions; this is the foundation of quality control. The marking of the reports is consistent and fair and the students are clearly receiving feedback, as the standard of the work improves incrementally. Some of the feedback is visible on-line, but consideration might be given to extending this provision, so students can easily locate and review the comments before writing subsequent assignments.

The marking of the examinations is also fair and consistent. Some scripts have been appended with useful observations on the strengths and shortcomings of the answers. Now that students are entitled to review their examination scripts, such comments are increasingly valuable and should be encouraged. Some scripts, however, exhibit nothing but a mark in the table on the front page; when an entire script does not even feature a tick or a cross, it is of no help to the student, and it hardly instils confidence in the process.

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y / N
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y / N
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y / N

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

The Intended Learning Outcomes for Fashion Technology align well with typical job specifications of posts in the fashion industry for which graduates from this programme are being prepared. The Fashion Technology BA programme beneficially offers more detailed theoretical content than similar courses at other institutions.

The Eco-Design module (DESN 2500) presents material which will prepare academically inclined students for the demands which will increasingly be expected of this industrial sector. Fashion Technology modules (DESN1467 and DESN 2468) introduce students to the scientific principles upon which high-performance garments are based. Likewise, Sports Design (DESN 2525) imbues an understanding of

insulation, water-proofing and moisture transport which make garments functional and fit for purpose. The Management modules (DESN 2469 and DESN 2615) explain how the industry operates and prepare students for working within a commercial framework, and ultimately managing it themselves. Such topics are not commonly taught in other institutions, partly because of the need for technically qualified teaching staff and partly also because of the academic demands such material places upon the students.

Overall, the whole programme is well conceived, in that its academic content confers a distinct advantage for academic design students entering the employment market. Furthermore, all the current second year students have arranged to undertake industrial placements; this will be of benefit to them in terms of maturity and employability and from experience it will be likely to significantly enhance their academic achievements in the final year.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
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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 instigation of a scholarly approach to design work commences in the first year, at the beginning of semester 1. Although Fashion Production Processes (DESN 1468) is essentially a practical module, the students investigate for themselves what seam structures and fastening techniques may be employed in various types of clothing. They report on the advantages and drawbacks of each and explain their selections in respect of their particular design of garment. Formal assignments are accompanied by referencing in standard (parenthetical) format.

The modules in Research Methods 1 (DESN2285) and Research Methods 2, (DESN2295) reinforce academic research practices in the second year and prepare students for their final year dissertation work. The associated lectures discuss qualitative and quantitative analysis; perhaps a little more practical data analysis might be beneficially incorporated into these modules.

Fashion Technology BA students write numerous assessed reports in an appropriately academic style, incorporating titled sections and standard referencing within the text. They spend significant time studying technological advances and monitoring current trends; this instils the research habit which should become imprinted for life.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

The inclusion in lectures on scientific theory and technological advancements, coupled with the research required for high quality formal submissions will form an appropriate basis for graduates to subsequently pursue doctoral studies.

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

N/A

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

The first and second years of the Fashion Technology programme have sufficient textile content and are of an appropriate academic standard to meet the requirements of the Textile Institute. However, it is probably wise to defer application for industrial accreditation until the detailed content of the final year has been firmly established.

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<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 Fashion Technology programme, although only in its second year is clearly on course to meet the level expected for the BA award that the students are heading towards.</p> <p>The examination process is rigorous and the marking has been executed dutifully, with students being appropriately rewarded for their efforts. The full range of marks is used; a student was rightly awarded full marks on one of the papers. Second marking of a proportion of the scripts has been performed; this is good practice.</p> <p>Coursework components of the programme are mostly submitted on-line and those from practical elements of the course were made available for inspection. The practical laboratory work and written assignments have been appropriately graded. Detailed feedback has been made available to the students and this is clearly heeded as subsequent assignments reflect steady improvement.</p> <p>Both the examination questions and the coursework assessments are carefully allied with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The examination questions tend to be phrased in such a way that the candidates can explain and expand on what they know of a subject. Rewarding knowledge and understanding rather than unduly penalising gaps in familiarity is appropriate when the subject areas are unusually broad, as they are in textiles. Undergraduates with practical talents are able to demonstrate their abilities in the laboratory sessions, in addition to students with more academic qualities.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y / N
<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 academic achievements of the students on the Fashion Technology programme compare well with undergraduates studying on comparable Honours BA programmes in other institutions. This reflects well on the design of the programme and on the quality of teaching. The technical content incorporated and the high quality management material should bestow on this cohort a significant advantage when encountering first destination employers. The writing of reports including first-hand experience of laboratory work to British Standards level cements their comprehension of the manufacturing technology and helps these young designers to grasp the implications of the materials and structures being used in their 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>It was notable how few illustrations the undergraduates included in their examination answers. It is particularly difficult to explain complex concepts without the aid of diagrams, and it might be expected that students pursuing studies in which drawing skills are valued might use their innate talent to advantage.</p> <p>The provision of example assignments has provided “feed-forward” which has undoubtedly improved the quality of formal reports. It has led to unexpected degree of uniformity; there was a preponderance of reports with large blue lettering on the title page. Similarly, although reports commonly included a table of contents, not a single submitted assignment featured the correct use of numbered sections. Perhaps a wider selection of example reports would encourage a little more analysis and discrimination.</p>		

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y / N
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y / N
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y / N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y / N
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y / N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y / N
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated? <u>Some scripts contained useful comments, but not all of them.</u>	Y / N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y / N
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N

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

The Fashion Technology BA programme is in its second year, so there were no final year projects to consider. Likewise, the award of degrees is not yet under consideration.

It was remarked last year that students are entitled (and should be encouraged) to inspect their examination scripts. It would therefore be helpful if a short comment were to be appended at the end of marked scripts. It is appreciated that some of the modules have large numbers of students and involve considerable marking, but even though the marks tell most of the story, confidence in the assessment process would surely improve and students would benefit from a little guidance in respect of their examination technique were a few remarks were to be appended to each of the assessed scripts.

Other comments

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

The course development team has done a very good job in structuring the Fashion Technology BA programme, taking advantage of best-practice as established elsewhere. It gives every expectation of providing prospective employers with precisely the type of students that the industry needs.

It is noted that optional modules are offered to first year students who must make a choice in terms of their future specialisation before they have discovered their strengths and weaknesses. Students not opting to study pattern cutting in the first year may have placed themselves at a disadvantage now that

pattern CAD is available in subsequent years, as they will lack the fundamentals of pattern drafting but may wish to become familiar with the Lectra software suite.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)***Title and Name of Examiner:**Subject(s):*

BA Hons Fashion Technology

Programme(s) / Module(s):

DESN1467: Intro to Fashion Technology; DESN1468: Garment Production Processes;
 DESN1830: Technologies for Art & Design; DESN2285: Research Methods 1;
 DESN2295: Research Methods 2; DESN2467: Fashion Technology for Production Development;
 DESN2468: Advanced Fashion Technology; DESN2469: Fashion Management;
 DESN2500: Eco-Design & Global Ecology; DESN2525: Design for Sports Clothing;
 DESN2615: Design Management and Trends; 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. 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 happy to see that our efforts to train students and provide appropriate guidance to allow them to produce good technical reports have yielded positive noticeable effects. We shall therefore continue with this aspect, bearing in mind the need to mitigate for homogeneity of report layout and what would appear a lower level of critical analysis of report structure, as you highlighted later in your report.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The introduction of the Lectra software, as guided by your comments last year has indeed constituted one of the larger steps in terms of continued enhancement to the programme. We are planning some continued enhancement of our teaching delivery in this front also and therefore plan to continue developing the programme in the direction you had kindly indicated for us.

This year (201819) online submission has now been made mandatory for all text based submissions across the School. The students are very happy with this change and I am glad that you also see the benefits.

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 are happy that on the whole you are reporting some very positive aspects of the course.

You make two points for particular improvements, as described below:

- You have identified that although feedback is provided and clear improvements can be seen between subsequent submissions as a result, not all feedback is available online, which may limit the access the students have to their feedback and/or their ability to make use of the feedback when writing subsequent assignments; Response: we will continue to implement methods for feedback to be visible online and extend this practice where practical to do so by marking and delivering feedback through Minerva.
- You raised the fact that some exam scripts do not feature any marks besides the grade on the front page, and that this not only limits the value that the student may gain from examining their marked script, but also impacts on the confidence in the marking process; you raised a similar comment last year; Response: your comment has been duly noted; remedying this deficiency will now become an action point for both our Director of Student Education and our Exams Officer; in the meantime, our team will also identify individuals to whom this particularly applies through reviewing a sample of marked scripts for all the modules; we will then target individual markers as identified to clearly pass on the request to include more annotations on exam scripts, and at the very least to include marks that identify that the section has been read and considered in the grading.

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 that you find our programme well-conceived and that in your opinion its academic content will confer a distinct advantage for our graduates in their first-destination employment.

We note your comments regarding including some more practical data analysis within the research methods module; this is a very valuable comment and we will endeavour to incorporate more of this component going forward at level 2, as well as providing mechanisms to deliver this training to our final year students who may have missed out on this content.

We also appreciate your comment regarding seeking accreditation from the Textile Institute. As you suggest, this activity is better suited to a time when the detailed content of the final year has been firmly established. In the meantime, we intend to become familiar with the required paperwork and plan for submission in due course.

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 are happy that you confirmed the programme structure, learning outcomes and assessment mechanisms are appropriate.

Your comment regarding the unexpected degree of uniformity in report structure and layout presumably due to the direct emulation by our students of the examples that we have provided to them is particularly interesting. We especially take on board your comment that we can encourage more analysis and discrimination regarding report structure/layout by providing a wider range of exemplars. We will therefore endeavour to provide more variety in examples where appropriate.

Regarding the unexpectedly low use of illustrations or diagrams in examination answers, it is possible that our students do not appreciate that these are appropriate components in an examination answer when supplemented appropriately with text. We will therefore ensure we communicate this clearly to our students.

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:

Response regarding the lack of written comments on some examination scripts has been noted and our approach to remedy this is described above.

Other comments

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

We note your comments regarding first year students selecting options that may restrict their future specialisation before they have discovered their strengths and weaknesses. We continue to mitigate against this risk by ensuring options are available at a number of levels and by making sure critical components remain part of the non-optional progression pathway. As you have particularly identified the topic of pattern cutting, I can confirm that we have ensured all essential aspects are included within the core module DESN1468 in order for all students to be in apposition to take advantage of the CAD resources (Lectra) that we have recently introduced.

We would like to thank you again for your hard work and invaluable guidance during tenure as External Examiner. We are very grateful to you for helping us establish the programme in line with best practice.