

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 13/11/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

English Literature

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Degree in English Literature

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

MA

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.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

I was pleased to see the use of an additional box on the feedback form to direct the student towards ways of improving their work in the future as recommended the previous year. The wording of "what you've done well" is particularly encouraging to students and also encourages examiners to be positive.

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

PLEASE SEE NOTE BELOW: THIS IS NOT INTENDED AS A MATTER FOR URGENT ATTENTION I understand from colleagues at Leeds that the Marking Criteria are under review. I would strongly recommend this (as I did last year). The distinction in terms of what is required between different classes or sub-classes is not made in a way that is helpful for markers.

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
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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 / 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.

Overall the MA schemes are working well. Students produce work at a range of levels as is common in the mixed constituency of an MA degree and their work is fairly marked and considered. There is very good evidence of an active use of the relationship between first and second markers with first markers flagging up areas of uncertainty or asking specifically for advice and second markers offering good support.

I moderated across a number of courses and dissertations. Where there were fails these were dealt with fairly and clearly. At the top end there was some very strong work. I particularly liked the dissertation on Marie Antoinette's body (200777257) and another very good dissertation on Animals Animism and Biosemiotics (201191383).

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)

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 MA provides an excellent grounding for a PhD particularly through the Research methods element and the dissertation.

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:

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:

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Assessment and Feedback

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>Yes, but see comments on marking criteria above.</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 performance across the cohort was comparable to that of my own institution and to other institutions at which I have externally examined.</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 / 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?	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:

There did seem to be some issues this year with general administration and communication with me in relation to sending out work to mark, date of exam boards etc. However, there were changes of staffing during the year so I assume this explains it.

Other comments

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

The only other point I made at exam board, but not included here, concerned the marking of Creative Writing work with pieces of creative writing as a main part of the assessment. Although I come from a joint department we do tend to retain clear boundaries between these two subjects and I did feel uneasy about my ability to adequately oversee Creative work and would prefer this to be covered by another external. With the appointment of a new second external next year this does seem like a good opportunity to cover this area – particularly if it is likely to be growing in the future.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

English Literature

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

School of English

Address for communication:

10 Cavendish Rd
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

Unfortunately, none are highlighted.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The amended feedback form is welcomed as an enhancement, of clear benefit to students.

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:

This issue is one which the School Taught Student Education Board will address. The Head of School wrote to the External Examiner for clarification concerning whether this advice was intended to be 'For Urgent Attention' as this field of the form might be expected to trigger an institutional response, rather than simply a School one. [Name] has confirmed that the placing of this text in this box was an error.

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:

The programme structure, aims, ILOs and so on, relating to academic standards, are unproblematic. It is good to hear that the several MA schemes are working well. This will inform the School project of considering the best structure for MA teaching and learning in the near future, given the institutional guidance on pathways and programmes that has been offered. It's gratifying to receive confirmation that the quality of work submitted is strong at the high end, with a range of marks and achievement in evidence. The School is pleased that the marking protocols are fully operational and robust. It is also good to hear that the teaching is clearly informed by staff research and specialism.

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:

It is good to have recorded the fact that the ILOs are achieved through the assessment scheme and that the design and structure of assessment methods are appropriate to the level of study. The School is engaged in ongoing discussions about assessment types and frequency, and so this information is helpful.

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:

While all the required information was sent to examiners in 2018 it is a fact that operations were disrupted by shortages and changes in the SES. The Faculty Education Service Manager is aware and has been supporting the School SES.

Other comments

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

The recommendation of a Creative Writing external examiner is being considered by the School.