

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 21/12/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

English and Drama

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Theatre and Global Development

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.

As in previous years I have been impressed by the structure of the four modules I have examined as they progress in a way that models a cycle of practice-based research. This notably includes the long-standing relationship with placement hosts who mentor excellently and also give the candidates formative feedback on their workshop practice. Taken together as a structure enacting Praxis, this configuration of the programme is a unique one and alongside the intellectual project I would underline that it aims to equip candidates for reflexive practice in the professional domain.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

If anything the feedback has been more detailed and exhaustive.

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

I am aware that the future is going to look different for this and other programmes and would re-iterate as I did at Board that the intellectual, cultural and social capital that has been built up over the years (with significant strategic partners providing meaningful placements) is not to be cast aside lightly by the School or indeed the University as a whole. To undervalue the investment of time in the relationship-building that this programme represents - as appearing overly high maintenance on paper - would be in my opinion a grave mistake, especially as Universities face greater scrutiny in terms of their outreach and public engagement activities.

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	Y / N

	responses to these?	
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/a
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 programme has built of its strengths over my four years and it has been a pleasure to see this. I note my comments have always been taken on board and suggestions put into practice.

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 programme is a unique one and the only competitor I am aware of is at _____ where I also teach. In a sentence, it models the full cycle of Praxis required for a scholar-artist working in the field to plan, carry out and evaluate original practice-based research, in a mode that balances discovery with delivery in both form and content.

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)

I would flag up in addition to the above the way that workshop planning is informed by the drafting of original practice-based research questions that are then interrogated through placements in the professional domain. Feedback is taken alongside the candidate's own evaluation and together this work on how practice can be brought to an evidencing of original research builds through the placement and the formative feedback thus elicited, to the bringing together of themes and modes of research in the dissertation. The candidates at their best submit a dissertation which I would happily rate as first year PhD level and it is the structure of the programme as a whole that underpins this high standard.

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

See13 above

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:

From individual workshop planning to the actual placements (which are crucially delivered in pairs) through to the feedback from tutors and mentors, the practical component of the programme is well-managed and configured in ways that maximise learning alongside the intellectual project.		
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 / N
<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>		
As I have said above, the way the programme models a practice based research cycle from planning through to evaluation is exemplary and the dissertations show this developmental cycle as potentially equipping them to deliver work at the highest level.		
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
<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>		
This was a very small cohort. The assessment structure and marking policy is fair and fit for purpose and the spread of marks equivalent to what I would expect from other programmes.		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		
I would hope to see the years of expertise that have gone into the configuration and delivery of this programme will be continued in ways that are practical whilst acknowledging it's unique value.		

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/a
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</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):

Theatre

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Theatre and Global Development

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

AHC

Address for communication:

School of English

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

The four modules examined provide a model for practice-based research. The contribution of the placement hosts/partners is invaluable as mentors and providers of formative feedback of workshop practice. A unique programme (see below), it equips students well ‘for reflexive practice in the professional domain’.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Feedback has become ‘more detailed and exhaustive’.

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:

PLEASE SEE EMAIL ATTACHED.

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:

It is gratifying to read that the external examiner’s comments have been listened to, and suggestions put into practice. Similarly, that the programme has gained in strength over four years.

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:

It is helpful to have a clear sense of the programme's unique standing, with one competitor invoked. The particular contribution of the programme is clearly articulated and will be of immense help to the School.

Equally helpful is the account of the integration of workshop planning, practice-based research questions, the work of placements and the uses of formative feedback. This is a useful background to the high standard of dissertation work produced by students. The management of the practical component of the programme alongside the intellectual project, and the relationship of feedback, tutoring and mentoring is articulated in ways which are also helpful to the School.

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:

That the practice-based research cycle from planning to evaluation is viewed as exemplary is a valuable insight for the School to reflect on. The high academic standards in assessment and feedback are noted alongside the experience which the structure of the programme, and its delivery, reflects.

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:

The progression and awards process was sufficient.

Other comments

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

None.

Dear

I'm replying quickly so that this doesn't carry over the break.

I am happy for the comments to appear in the box that immediately follows 35. Please let me know if there is anything else you need me to do: I will be online later today for the last time this semester.

All my best

Sent from my iPhone

On 20 Dec 2018, at 11:38,

wrote:

Dear

Thank you for submitting your report. May I ask whether you intended your comments on the MA in Theatre and Global Development to go into the box on page 3 of 8 (Part B) marked 'Matters for Urgent Attention'? I ask simply because comments in that box are usually about procedural or quality issues/infringements and are escalated to the highest level. It seems to me, however, that you are asking for the School and Institution to consider the future of this programme -- which we are currently doing. That is why, as I hope we explained sufficiently, we have suspended recruitment to it, in the light of relatively poor student numbers over a number of years, which is a factor that negatively affects students' experience when enrolled.

If you could confirm that you intended those reflections to be a 'Matter for Urgent Attention' that would be helpful. There is no question of the 'intellectual, cultural and social capital [...] built up over the years [...being] cast aside lightly by the School'.

I would be grateful for your confirmation regarding this question.

Best wishes,

Head of School, English.