

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 23/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Subject(s):	<i>History</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	History
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

Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.
I am impressed by the range of modules offered and the interesting and varied approach to subject, assessment and teaching practice.
I should like to highlight the evidence that different means of assessment have not only been implemented, but the means of assessment and its communication to the students has been considered and implemented.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
External examiners did not have access to any details of students' circumstances in cases of mitigating circumstances. This is good practice and in line with other comparable institutions in which the external examiners trust the welfare teams within departments to administer such cases sensitively and equitably. The use of a Senior Wellbeing Tutor in the department is welcome.

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
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
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5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	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)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y

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

The structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes are all considered and consistent. The teaching in the department is rigorous, challenging and stimulating from what I can perceive of the outcomes.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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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?	N
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

n/a

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	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)?	N
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

n/a

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
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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.

The modules are interesting, challenging and stimulating: learning outcomes are clearly displayed as are marking criteria and means of assessment. This is reflected in student performance which at the highest levels is as good as anywhere nationally (and internationally).

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

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:

Student performance at the top end was exceptional. The new marking scheme for 2017-18 is taking time to bed in, and the department was urged to think about the full range of the scale, at the top end for all assessment and not only dissertations, and across the board at the lower end of the scale.

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

I should like to know more about the modules and their practice across the year. Perhaps it would be possible to send out course packs (electronically is fine) when the courses are being taught rather than with the final exam scripts, and perhaps external examiners could be given access during their tenure to departmental VLEs.

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

Other comments

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

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Subject(s):	History
Programme(s) / Module(s):	History
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA
Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	History
Address for communication:	Michael Sadler Building, University of 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 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

I'd like to thank _____ for _____ kind comments about the range of modules and modes of assessment on offer.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

I'm glad that our mitigating circumstances process meets with _____ approval and agree that the introduction of a Senior Tutor for Wellbeing has been a positive innovation.

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:

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:

I'm grateful for positive comments about module design and delivery, and teaching standards overall.

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:

I'm pleased that the assessment and marking raise no issues for concern. We will continue to encourage colleagues to use the full range of the new scale more consistently and have initiated discussions about this at our Taught Student Education Committee. We are currently exploring how to give externals access to the required materials in the most efficient way and will certainly consider these suggestions. Plans have been put in place to send handbooks and the Code of Practice to externals earlier in the cycle, and are exploring the possibility of making the Minerva (our VLE) accessible as well.

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:

N/A

Other comments

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

N/A

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 09/07/2018

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined***Title and Name of Examiner:**Faculty / School of:*

History

Subject:

History

Programme / Modules:

VL100. (HIST2290; HIST2291; HIS2121; HIST2420; HIST2305; HIST2125; HIST2433; HIST2100; HIST2101; HIST2135; HIST2121; HIST2308; HIST3300; HIST3470; HIST339201; HIST3500; HIST3685; HIST3315; HIST3580; HIST3235; HIST3737; HIST3728; HIS3732)

Awards:

BA

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards**Points of innovation and/or good practice**

1. Full and fair markers' comments and clarity where disagreements were resolved.
2. Dissertation integrity declaration
3. Excellent exam mark sheets.

Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

Matters for Urgent Attention

Nothing urgent, but many recommendations, below.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	N
3.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Mentor?	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	N/A
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	N/A
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

The executive summary is that I have no concerns at all about the marking and assessment of any of the scripts I received, and indeed have been positively impressed by the teaching and assessment of History at Leeds.

However, mine was generally a very unsatisfactory experience. The reasons were not all the responsibility of Leeds, and many were extraordinary, so this report is prefaced and framed by two facts which explain much of what is to follow. This is my first year as external examiner, and it was a year heavily disrupted by the UCU industrial action of which I was part. I much regret that the exam board met before I was able to offer my report, but it was not possible to present it any earlier

That this was my first year as examiner inevitably meant unfamiliarity with processes and practices, and a generally smoother running of matters in subsequent years. However, I felt keenly the absence of an induction event or process, and this contrasted unfavourably with other institutions where I have acted as external examiner. I have always found this to be of great value, and being unable to attend the exam board I felt it more keenly later on.

That oversight – no induction provision – may itself have been a consequence of the UCU industrial action of which I was part. The action was extremely disruptive of my work at my own institution, of my other external examining duties, and other commitments. It impacted on my work at Leeds similarly, but exceptionally so in that I was not clear about my status until relatively late in the process. In addition to the recommendation of UCU to resign all external examining duties, I and my fellow examiners had offered our resignation to the Vice Chancellor, on the grounds of the University's policy of threatening to dock pay colleagues who did not agree immediately to reschedule teaching lost through industrial action, and for which they have already lost pay. The Vice-Chancellor's reply to us of 20 March gave every impression of accepting our resignations, so it was a surprise when correspondence resumed, but so late – given my other commitments – that it added to the bottleneck of scripts and other matters which have meant that my report can only now be submitted and the scripts returned. The Leeds scripts arrived with barely more than ten days before the board, which, given my other commitments (also impacted by the industrial dispute) meant that it was impossible to turn them around in time. It also – in addition to a four-week research trip in the US – meant that I was unable to read and comment on exam papers in time for the scrutiny meeting.

The final extraordinary reason why this has been an unsatisfactory experience was my own organising of a conference at Exeter University, 21-3 June, for Britain and the World, of which I am president, which meant that I was unable to attend the Leeds exam board, or indeed to do much work on anything other than that conference for that week.

Those were all exceptional, and I expect them not to be repeated.

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)?	Y
12.	Is the programme comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
My overall impression of the programme structure was positive, although I found – at least through the samples I received (of which more later) that it was light on twentieth and twenty first century history.		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y

Academics are clearly engaged in research-informed teaching, as they should be		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
Indirectly, very appropriate. Some of the dissertations were of quite exceptional quality.		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
N/A		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
N/A		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
As to modules I found the modules to be well-designed – some also being really imaginative – and, based on the quality of the work, well-delivered. Where state two and stage three modules were clearly complementary there was good progression. Rigour in marking was evident throughout.		
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
I am perfectly satisfied as to the academic standards demonstrated by students in relation to all other programmes with which I am familiar.		
<p><u>HIST2290</u>. 190-45 Britain. My own subject, and very well done too. Excellent handbook, exemplary exam marking, but so fulsome that I hope the student gets to see them (I return to this later). So complementary to HIST2291 that I wonder if it's a prerequisite, or if it's felt that students on 2101 who did not take 2291 are disadvantaged over those that did: is open to all? Excellent handbook. Coursework?</p> <p><u>HIST2291</u>. No marksheet. 1945-1990 Britain. My own subject, and a course I thought very well structured with scripts very well marked. Excellent handbook.</p> <p><u>HIS2121</u>. Politics of Labour 1660-1870. No concerns, but I was only sent exam scripts for this module.</p> <p><u>HIST2420</u>. Nationalism in India. No problems, but assessed essay? VLE presentation?</p> <p><u>HIST2305</u>: Mughals 1600-1857. Not a subject on which I'm able to offer anything of value, but as far as the scripts were concerned there were no problems, but assessed essay? VLE presentation?</p> <p><u>HIST2125</u>: Britain and the Atlantic World. Not a subject on which I'm able to offer anything of value, but as far as the scripts were concerned there were no problems, but assessed essay?</p> <p><u>HIST2433</u>. The Global Caribbean. 1756-1848. Not a subject on which I'm able to offer anything of value, but as far as the scripts were concerned there were no problems, but assessed essay?</p>		

HIST2100. Early Victorian England. Not remotely the title that's on the marksheet. Exemplary marking and comments. Assessed essays? So complementary to HIS2101 that I wonder if it's a prerequisite, or if it's felt that students on 2101 who did not take 2100 are disadvantaged over those that did: is open to all? Rather more minimalist a handbook than other

HIST2101. Later Victorian England. No the title that's on the marksheet. Other comments as for 2100.

HIST2135. Britain and the Industrial Revolution. Both exam scripts and essays were included. Real sense of discussion between markers. Exemplary.

HIST2121. Politics of Labour. Excellent, imaginative module. Assessed essays?

HIST2308. British India 1690-1871. I had to work out the module code as it's nowhere to be found in the handbook, and the module title is different from that on the marksheet. Not a subject on which I'm able to offer anything of value, but as far as the scripts were concerned there were no problems,

HIST3300. Chartism. Excellent handbook. Assessed essays too. 100% firsts, but justifiably so.

HIST3470. Memories. Excellent module: really imaginative. Good range of marks. Ideal method of assessment.

HIST339201. I had to work out the (very long) module code as it's nowhere to be found in the handbook. No marksheet either. Not a subject on which I'm able to offer anything of value, but as far as the scripts were concerned there were no problems, but assessed essay?

HIST3500. Dissertations. A marksheet would have been helpful. There were some very high marks here, but the dissertations justified them, and I generally found the first and second markers' comments to be full and judicious. I would quibble with a few of the final marks, but did not find any general or serious issues with the grades. I did find the variation in presentation, formatting, and style problematic however. The department should have a single style guide and submitted coursework should conform to it. More structured marksheet, typewritten comments, and initials of markers would have been helpful.

HIST3685. Georgians at War. Assessed work included. No problems, though another module the subject of which is far from my area of competence.

HIST3315. Citizens of the World. Module code missing from handbook cover. Handbook of the maximalist kind; by far the longest of any module, possibly counter-productively so. Coursework and exam included.

HIST3580. Empire 1870-1914. Coursework and exams provided. Very fully marked. Excellent practice.

HIST3235. Dividing India. Interesting module, excellent handbook. All work provided.

HIST3737. Afterlives of Empire. Interesting module, well-marked. Coursework and exams included. Module code nowhere to be found on handbook.

HIST3728. Contemporary Britain. My subject. As with 2291 very well done, and well-constructed progression from 2290 and 2291. Extensive first marker comments. All work submitted.

HIS3732: Men and masculinity. Very interesting module. Not clear why I was sent so many scripts. And assessed work?

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?	N
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?	N
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

I was very surprised that a university of Leeds's size and resources does not have a VLE to which students submit coursework and to which one could be given access. My own institution has Blackboard, and as an external examiner I have had access to _____ and _____ systems, on each of which all student coursework is submitted, marker comments can be read, and from where scripts can be downloaded and/or printed as per the preference of the marker.

It was partly for that reason that a quite extraordinary amount of paper arrived addressed to me in several large parcels. I concede that there is no alternative to this for exam scripts, but for coursework and dissertations this I find the packing, posting, and then repacking and reposting of so much paper to be a deeply archaic practice. Moreover, I was astonished that dissertations were printed on one side of the paper, which mean that there was precisely twice as much paper and weight as was necessary. My own institution has insisted on duplex-printed dissertations for some time now, with the obvious benefits on storage and circulation. It was in toto a quite unnecessary mass of paper to ship around the country.

Other comments

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

My final general point relates to my responsibilities. I am a historian of post-1914 Britain, and it was for that reason that I assumed I was invited to take up my present role. I was therefore surprised to find that only two of the 21 modules I was sent which were directly relevant to my expertise, and many which were very far from relevant. I am not able to offer any constructive observations on eighteenth-century Britain, much less the Caribbean, or India (about

which there was much), so I wondered why I was sent those scripts. I raise this point as much for elucidation as any complaint, though it may also reflect imprecision in the appointment of external examiners; or perhaps that there should be more of them. Certainly the number of scripts I received compared to my work at other institutions suggested something of the latter.

Recommendations made:

1. Fuller induction, ideally on-site, of new external examiners.
2. An online submission portal for all coursework to which external examiners have access.
3. All coursework – and particularly dissertations – to be printed double-sided, and to be downloadable from the online portal.
4. More structured mark sheets for dissertations.
5. All comments intended to be for students to be clearly identified as such.
6. Greater consistency on handbooks and marksheets. It's really very simple: module code, title, module leader.
7. All markers' comments to be initialled.

Recognitions offered:

1. Full and fair markers' comments and clarity where disagreements were resolved.
2. Dissertation integrity declaration
3. Excellent exam mark sheets.

Clarification sought.

1. On-site induction.
2. My subject areas
3. Why I was sent only exam scripts for some modules.
4. The extent and form of student exam feedback.

In terms of support, _____'s explanation of the school's actions to mitigate the effects of the dispute were clear and comprehensive. I am satisfied with the steps that were taken, and the group of colleagues who took part. Summary of their discussion was sent on 19 June. _____'s communications were helpful throughout the process. I'd also like to record my thanks to _____, who I found to be extremely prompt in responding to questions, helpful, and frank in all particulars.

I look forward to a smoother experience – on both sides – next year.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

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 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

I'd like to thank _____ for highlighting these areas of good practice.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

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:

I'd like to thank _____ for these suggestions, which will be responded to in the relevant sections.

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:

I'm sorry to learn that your first experience as external for us was unsatisfactory. Some of these issues have been responded to in a previous communication, and I hope the experience this year will be smoother on all sides. We have certainly taken this feedback on board and will look to improve the support we give to externals in light of it.

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:

I'd like to thank [redacted] for this endorsement of our standards. We offer a significant amount of twentieth century history globally, though some of this falls into our International History and Politics rather than BA History programme.

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:

I'd like to thank [redacted] for these full and detailed comments on the modules [redacted] looked at. With regard to Hist 2100 and 2101, and Hist 2290 and 2291, these are open to all and students can choose whether to take either one or both of these modules. As they run in consecutive semester students can take them as pairs, though this is not required. I'm sorry to learn that you did not receive the assessed coursework for all modules. We will look into how and why this happened and ensure that this is rectified in future – externals are usually sent essays and exam scripts, but not presentations/VLE posts (as the latter make up only 10% of the module mark). Module codes should have been included on all handbooks and we will amend the master template to provide this prompt in future. I've passed specific comments on to the relevant module leads.

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:

I'd like to thank [redacted] for [redacted] comments. Leeds does have a VLE and makes extensive use of it, though until now we have not included it in our external examination processes. We are looking into how we make material available to externals and will most certainly take the suggestions and comments into account.

Other comments

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

Thank you for these helpful and incisive comments. We will certainly look into the allocation of modules to external examiners in line with these suggestions and will also take up the various other points made at our Taught Student Education Committee and implement them wherever practicable.

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 30/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

History

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BA History: various non-British modern history modules – covering India, Africa, Korea, the Caribbean, the United States, Russia etc.

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

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 professional support staff were exceptionally good at providing me with the material I needed in a timely manner. I would especially like to highlight the practice of providing externals (and, I hope and presume, internal examiners) with a statistical overview of each module.

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 statistical analysis of each module was an enhancement from last year and much to be welcomed.

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 /
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y /
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?	/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 School of History has fair, transparent and generally consistent assessment practices and these standards have been maintained during the period of my appointment.

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)?	Y /
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y /
<p>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>Leeds offers students a broad range of module choices and all the modules I saw were well structured to the appropriate level.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y /
<p>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)</p> <p>The School evidently has researchers working at a very high level who are teaching interesting and well-designed modules that draw on their expertise. This was evident from the module outlines and bibliographies as well as from the imaginative ways in which some modules were structured around historical problems rather than simply chunks of time.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	/ N
<p>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	/ N
<p>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	/ N
<p>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y /
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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.

The assessment methods for the modules I saw were all “traditional” in the sense that they were exams, dissertations or coursework essays. This is appropriate in a humanities discipline and from what I could see the School does a good job of ensuring that students are well trained in how to write with precision and build arguments based on evidence. The feedback from markers generally mapped clearly onto the School’s marking criteria and so I conclude that LOs were well aligned with assessment.

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 /

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:

Students doing History at Leeds are clearly of a very high quality and they are producing work that is certainly comparable with peer institutions around the country with which I am familiar. The best work was historiographically informed and well written. Some of the dissertations showcased intellectually imaginative answers to interesting historical questions, and were based on a quantity and quality of original research that one would not normally expect of undergraduates.

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

There were undoubtedly more very high first class marks in the work I was sent than I am used to either in my own institution or in others where I’ve been an external. I saw marks in the 90s and several in the 80s for dissertations. I am not against such high marks but I would encourage the department to ensure that if some internal markers are using those marks, then *all* should feel able to do so. It was certainly not always obvious to me why some modules had much higher mark distributions at the top end than others.

A related suggestion: building on the excellent practice of sending externals analyses of the module marks, would it also be possible for externals – or, even more importantly, internal markers – also to see where each module’s mark sits in the distribution of marks over the School as a whole? It may be useful to colleagues to see whether their marks were at the low or the top end of the curve.

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

Other comments

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

My impression based on the work I've seen is that Leeds has a top class history programme delivered by effective and imaginative teachers. All the work I saw was carefully marked and the feedback to students generally very helpful and specific. Students are lucky to have the range of interesting module options that they have available. And at the top end the work being produced is seriously impressive: sophisticated scholarship based on substantial research.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

History

Programme(s) / Module(s):

History

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

BA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

History

Address for communication:

Michael Sadler Building, University of 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 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

I'm grateful positive comments and will pass on kind words to the SES team.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

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:

I'd like to thank for encouraging assessment of our standards, and for all the work has done on our behalf during his tenure as external.

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:

comments about the centrality of research-led teaching in our module design are very welcome.

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:

I'm glad that assessment and feedback in the School is considered generally robust. We will certainly take on board the question of how to ensure that colleagues are using marks at the higher end appropriately and consistently. The suggestion of making comparative statistical information about overall module marks is a helpful one, which we will look to implement.

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:

N/A

Other comments

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

We are very grateful for these warm, positive and encouraging comments.