

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QA Team received 18/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, Languages for All

Subject(s):

French

Programme(s) / Module(s):

LfA FLTU French modules

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

N/A

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 last year I saw evidence of excellent performances by students in both oral and written work. There is a good spread of marks across the modules.

Course topics and assessments are varied and interesting for students.

Independent learning is encouraged by allowing students free choice in presentation topics.

A class test was piloted this year on some of the beginners' modules FLTU 1302 to replace the portfolio. I have made further comments on this below.

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 programme is largely the same as last year.

I found it much easier to navigate the VLE this year and all modules had materials uploaded for me to view in advance, which was not the case in 2016-17. There is still some variety in the way evidence of moderation and double marking is presented, I found the assessment for the module FLTU 1345 particularly well organised with all materials uploaded and a list of assessments to sample provided. I have made further comments on organising the samples for the external at the end of this form.

There was evidence of two markers being present in most of the orals this year, which meant that post exam moderation was unnecessary.

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

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 CEFR
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 LfA French modules have been designed in accordance with the CEFR. The topics and tasks set are appropriate to the levels and clearly engaging for the students. At all levels students have the opportunity to present topics of personal interest and they work on group presentations in all but beginners' level. There is clear progression from one level to the next both in terms of language acquisition and outcomes.

Group presentations are an important component in the LfA programme and these are valuable in fostering independence, autonomy and group work. I sampled some impressive presentations where students not only presented well but were able to ask and answer questions. The only level where the format did not always give me a clearly differentiated view of the students work was at lower intermediate level. There was a lot of reading, which made the presentations difficult to understand and students struggled to ask each other questions or to understand and answer unprepared questions. As a formative part of the course the Lower Intermediate students benefit from preparing and delivering the presentations but as a summative assessment, differentiation in performance was not always easy to identify. I know the French team consider the presentation to be a valuable part of the course, but wonder if the assessment brief could be modified to discourage reading and to support students in asking and answering questions.

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)

The curriculum is current and comparable to other institutions delivering Languages for All programmes. The materials are engaging and contemporary. Students have the opportunity to present their own research in the target language.

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:

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	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
<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>The LfA French modules and assessments have been designed in accordance with the CEFR. There is clear evidence that LfA tutors adhere to general university marking criteria, benchmarked against assessment of particular language activities. The marking criteria are clear and consistently applied.</p>		
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>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>On all modules there is a good spread of marks and average marks are in all cases around 60%. Where students have failed the module it has been because they have missed a part of the assessment and have usually had mitigating circumstances taken into consideration. There are some excellent performances at every level and at the higher levels, students are able to speak and write freely on a variety of topics.</p> <p>Occasionally there were either exceptionally weak or strong performances where the students may have been placed in the wrong level at the start of the course. Placing students at the correct level is a constant challenge for LfA programmes and as discussed with the team it is often student who register late and perhaps miss some lessons at the beginning of the course who ends up incorrectly placed. Student placement needs to be constantly monitored as it is an important part of QA for elective language programmes across the sector.</p>		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		

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?	N/A
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 / 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?	N/A
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	N/A
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Awards Board?	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the 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> For the LfA programme, there is no Progression Board</p>		

Other comments

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

The French LfA team sent me all draft papers to review and responded to my feedback. This year on the module FLTU1302, the portfolio was replaced by an in class test, as a pilot. If it is decided to adopt this form of assessment for the Beginners modules, to replace the portfolio and if it still includes two pieces of writing these need to be given very clear weighting within the test. I would support the change from portfolio to in-class test, as for all but the very best students managing the portfolio from both staff and student perspective can be problematic.

The French team at Leeds also work very hard uploading all work onto the VLE. Especially at the lower levels, where there are a lot of students, I would like to suggest that only a sample of the work from each assessment is uploaded (rather than work from the whole cohort), with clear documentation attached.

In my institution we upload two samples from each classification range, all fails and any work that the markers had difficulty with. The most important aspect of the uploading of assessment material is that I should have an overview of student performance and am easily able to link the evidence of marking and moderation to the student's work, and where appropriate types of feedback given.

As highlighted above, the External Examiners area of the Advanced French module FLTU 1345 is particularly well organised and user friendly. For this module all work is uploaded but where the cohorts are very large a sample of well organised work and documentation, as outlined above is ideal.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

French

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Languages for all

Faculty / School of:

AHC/LCS

Address for communication:

Michael Sadler Building,
University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane
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

It is pleasing to see that course topics and assessments are identified as examples of good practice. We are also very pleased to see that the External Examiner is very happy with students' standards.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We are pleased that our response to the last year's report has helped the external Examiner to access materials on Minerva. We'll continue to address the issues raised by the External Examiner, notably 'variety in the way evidence of moderation and double marking is presented'

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:

We are very pleased that the External Examiner is happy with the design of our modules, and that the topics and tasks are appropriate to the levels. We are also very happy to learn that the External examiner is impressed with some of our students' presentations.

The Team will consider the External examiner's recommendation of modifying presentations to 'discourage reading and to support students in asking and answering questions'.

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 very pleased that the External Examiner found our marking to be clear, consistent and adhering to the designed marking criteria.

We will continue to monitor student placement needs as recommended by the External Examiner.

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

As recommended by the External Examiner, clear weighting will be given to the two writing pieces of the in-class test, replacing the portfolio. Also, samples of each classification range will be made available to the external examiner.