

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 26/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

Subject(s):

Japanese

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Language for All
Modules: FLTU1020; 1021; 1023; 1025; 1026, 1022, 1125

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

Discovery modules

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

The portfolio (FLTU1020, 1021) and presentation (FLTU1023, 1026) work demonstrates good approaches to learn a new language which gave the students valuable learning experience to become independent learners and gain a deeper understanding of the language. They also raised their awareness of life and culture in Japan.

Enhancements made from the previous year

The writing test for FLTU1021 has been enhanced with the use of the Japanese manuscript which gave the students the opportunity to learn how to write an essay on the vertical manuscript.

Matters for Urgent Attention

No urgent attention is required.

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

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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
I found that overall the programme structure, design, aims and ILO are adequate.		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
Yes. Research on the project work in the curriculum clearly indicated the students' deeper understanding of the language and their awareness of life and culture in Japan.		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / 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)?	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
<p>The ILOs were appropriate for the modules. The modules are generally well structured and contain the appropriate content that is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Many forms of assessment were used, such as core tests, portfolios, and oral exams which were all well designed. The marking criteria for the speaking and writing assessments are clear. As a whole the marks are fair and have been appropriately moderated internally.</p> <p>I, however, found that some speaking assessments for middle and bottom range were marked slightly higher than I would have marked. I feel that marks for accuracy tends to be overmarked. I provided my marks with some comments as requested by the teacher.</p> <p>The Japanese manuscript was used for the Elementary Japanese writing assessment this year. I observed that the students were guided and used it well for the assessment. However, the writing style should be reconsidered as it is a script style with series of speaking lines. The students should be able to write a narrative style essay.</p>		

It has been clarified by the response last year that the summative assessments for the FLTU1023 have been decided to focus on the productive skills which integrated with the receptive skills. Taking that into account, I found that selection of the skills for the assessments are suitable in terms of needs for the actual communication.		
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
The students were generally given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of aims and ILOs. The academic standards and performance demonstrated by the students were appropriate in relation to students on comparable courses I have been associated with.		
I observed that the students were given the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement not only in terms of language skills, but also in terms of intercultural awareness through the portfolios (Beginners and Elementary Japanese) and projects (Lower Intermediate Japanese) 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 / 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
I was pleased that the number of useful information has been uploaded on Moodle including the finalised assessments. I was, therefore, able to notified that all the points which I suggested on the draft were taken into account.		

As the selected samples were not yet uploaded on Moodle which was agreed last year, I requested to upload the marked paper from top, middle, bottom and all the fails for each module. I received swift response from the teacher and files were immediately uploaded as requested. I strongly would like to recommend to do the same in the future as it greatly helps to overview the marks efficiently. The teacher has also uploaded the FLTU1023 and 1026 speaking presentation videos. It would be ideal if the feedback and marks of these videos were uploaded in the same file.

As Minevar is used for the University website this year, the display on the screen was different from the previous year. With this change, it was not straightforward to find External Examiner's VLE site. I was finally able to access the site with the help of the teacher. For future reference, it would be useful if the details of the standardised navigation to access the site were to be made available to External Examiners as suggested in the Board Examiners' meeting.

Other comments

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

I understand that the portfolio would be replaced with writing assessment next year. It would be ~~the~~ interesting to observe how the students demonstrate their productivity and independency of their writing skills through the assessment.

The other concern regarding the change in the future assessments is excluding writing test from core task. As reading and listening marks are generally high, the average of the core task could be lead to quite high. Making the reading and listening questions difficult is one way of dealing with this issue as mentioned in the meeting. However, I would think that it is challenging to make the questions harder than they are at present. The other adjustment would be to lower the weight of the core task so the whole marks would not be affected greatly by the high marks of the core task.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Japanese

Programme(s) / Module(s):

LfA Japanese modules – FLTU 1020; 1021; 1023; 1025; 1026; 1022; 1125

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:

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies
Michael Sadler Building
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

We are very pleased with the External Examiner's comments regarding the strengths of the portfolio of independent learning, which forms part of the assessment mix at beginner and elementary level, and the group presentation task at lower-intermediate level, in terms of fostering learning independence and cultural exploration. This is something we seek to enhance and develop going forward. The portfolio has been reduced in scale for this academic year, but we will aim to maintain its scope and breadth in its new reduced format.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We thank the External Examiner for suggestion regarding the adoption of the *genkouyoushi* format for writing tasks at elementary level, which were implemented in 2017. Unfortunately, the Writing Core Task was removed from the blend of assessments for languages with a script in 2018. However, the use of *genkouyoushi* and the attendant cultural knowledge, will be encouraged within the portfolio of independent learning. This can be the case for both beginner and elementary level.

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:

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:

N/A

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 thank the External Examiner for supportive comments with regard to the ILOs and criteria.

We discussed the appropriate marks to give students who demonstrated significantly above average ability in the group speaking task at lower-intermediate level. As a consequence there will be a more rigorous analysis of the level of accuracy of spoken Japanese for those achieving higher grades (over 70 in particular). We very grateful to the external examiner for marking suggestions and these have and will be taken into account going forward. With our modules being designed to progress from each other it is important to take into consideration that students taking the group speaking task in week 10 of the lower-intermediate module have only had c.15 hours of classroom time beyond that at completion of the elementary course. Marks have to be awarded with this in mind and we are satisfied that the students who achieved in the 70s for this task were performing at a level far higher than that which could be expected at the conclusion of the elementary module. This will be monitored this academic year.

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:

We are glad that the ease of access to completed student assessments was improved this year. We will ensure that this is further enhanced in the coming year and selected assessments, as per the External Examiner's recommendation are uploaded separately to maximise ease of access. We thank the External Examiner for suggestions in this regard.

Other comments

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

Maintaining a comparable and fair average mark for the core tasks in 2018/19, as the External Examiner indicates, will be a challenge with the withdrawal of the writing core task. Reasonable steps will be taken to balance the level of difficulty and a further review will take place should the marks be considered too high. This academic year there is the potential for greater variety of approach in relation to question setting, so this may help in maintaining the average student mark.