

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017–18

QAT Received 29/09/2018

**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):*

English for Academic Purposes

*Programme(s) / Module(s):*

ELU3009: Language for Arts and Humanities  
ELU3011: Language for Education

*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.*

I believe that the Language for Education module provides a very good example of a content-led English for Academic Purposes module. The essay titles are both extremely relevant, I believe the group presentations represent a realistic task that students are likely to meet on their degree programmes, and I was especially impressed by the assessed reflective task as it represents the kind of activity that is becoming increasingly common, especially on Education degree programmes.

**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 areas that I highlighted in last year's report in relation to the Language for Arts and Humanities programme are still a matter of concern for me, and something that I would like to raise under 'Matters for Urgent Attention'. This is not so much because they are 'urgent' *per se*, but because I am still uncertain as to the appropriateness of book *Critical Thinking* as a key text.

**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*

There are two areas of concern:

1. The administrative arrangements for the process are not satisfactory. The turnaround time for the assessed work is inadequate, and this was particularly problematic this year as my access to Minerva lapsed on the same day that I was sent the assessed work, i.e., the afternoon and early evening before the exam board. There is also an issue with regard to sampling i.e., I was only sent five examples of assessed work for Language for Arts and Humanities, and three examples for Language for Education. Typically, an External Examiner would expect to have access to a wider range of papers and also have the opportunity to access all assessed work prior to the exam board. The current process puts undue pressure on the External Examiner and in my own case, assessment of the papers was only possible this year because I arrived at the Centre early and spent a number of hours reading through the papers. Had this not been possible, I would have been unable to assess the students' work, which would have resulted in quality assurance issues. I raised these concerns at the exam board, and I appreciate that there are logistical and administrative issues. However, I do feel that this is something that needs to be considered seriously for next year. Following on from this, there also needs to be further clarification as to the External Examiner's role and responsibilities. In my previous experiences as an External Examiner, moderation and quality assurance have been the key functions of the role. However, I was told at the

exam board that moderation of exam papers is not one of my key responsibilities, and that my role should be 'forward-looking'.

2. My second concern – and something that I also brought up at this year's exam board and mentioned in my report last year – is the difficulty I have with the key text on the Language for Arts and Humanities module i.e., Jennifer Moon's *Critical Thinking* (2008).

An example of this difficulty is the essay title, which I find problematic for a number of reasons. The essay title is as follows: *Critical thinking would seem to be a gathering of various processes such as understanding, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and so on [...] There is also a sense of direction to critical thinking – a sense that we have some defined reason for engaging in the process.* (Moon, 2008: 25) *In light of this quotation, critically think about a 'text' from your discipline and show how these thinking processes help you gain greater understanding of its creation and reception.*

The first issue I have with this title concerns Moon's use of the words 'would seem', as in fact what she is producing is a summary under a subtitle 'Common-sense views of Critical Thinking', i.e., this definition, as opposed to any other definition, is closely associated with a 'commonsense' understanding of criticality, and is thus misleading. Second, the ellipsis marks replace very important contextual information, i.e., the ellipsis refers to '(such as those described by Bloom, 1956) and termed "tools of manipulation of knowledge"'. This lack of context is problematic, as Bloom suggests a skills approach to critical thinking – rather than a content-based understanding, which is the basis of these modules. Thus, overall, my feeling is that this title has been manipulated to reflect more an EAP understanding of what it means to be critical, and does not necessarily reflect that of the receiving programmes.

This understanding of Moon also results in essays and presentations that tend to be overly descriptive and not something that students would be required to produce on their future degree programmes. Although a very respected author on critical thinking in her own field, Moon's view of critical thinking is in itself not balanced and in many respects could be described as 'Modern', and this is reflected in the assessment generally. For example, in the presentations there is a clear understanding among students that being critical involves finding *the* meaning of an artwork through an understanding of the artist's bibliography and there is a marked absence of other understandings of criticality that the students will surely meet in their future studies, e.g., in the first lecture, students are introduced to advertising where reference to Roland Barthes and semiology would have been useful, as it is theory that the students are likely to have already encountered in their undergraduate studies and which they are very likely to meet on their future degree programmes. By introducing such theory as semiology it would also allow the 'critical' aspect of the programme to be more embedded rather than presenting critical thinking as a skill.

I realise that my own view of criticality may not necessarily be shared by colleagues at Leeds, but it is based on my own doctoral research into the meaning of criticality within the Fine Art department at [redacted] and through working with subject colleagues in other related programmes such as Visual Cultures, Curating and Luxury Brand Management. If it would be helpful, I would be happy to discuss these ideas more fully with EAP colleagues at Leeds and share my own syllabus for a content-led module that I teach on the [redacted] Pre-Sessional.

### **For Examiners in the first year of appointment**

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

### **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

*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*

N/A

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## 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><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The modules compare well with similar content-led pre-sessional programmes I have taught on and assess either in my role as an External Examiner or as a BALEAP Assessor. Both programmes provide appropriate and clearly articulated Intended Learning Outcomes.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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></p> <p>Although it is evident that both modules have been influenced by current thinking in relation to EAP content-led programmes, I believe that the Language for Education module achieves this more successfully than the Language for Arts and Humanities module for the reasons I discuss in 'Matters for Urgent Attention'.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

## Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<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>The design and structure of the assessment methods and the arrangements for the marking of modules and classification of awards are very good. I was particularly impressed by the assessment descriptors, which give a very clear visual representation and represent excellent practice. I was also very impressed by the standard of marking and level of feedback across the two modules.</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
<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>		

The academic standards demonstrated by the students are comparable with those of students on similar programmes with which I am familiar.

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

### 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?	N
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?	N
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 Progression and Awards Board?	N
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?	N/A

*Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:*

I have responded 'No' to Questions 28 and 32 as they relate to the very brief turnaround time provided and to the role of the External Examiner. These, and other related issues, are discussed more fully in the 'Matters for Urgent Attention' section.

### Other comments

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

N/A

**Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report****Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

*English language pre-sessional*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Language for Arts and Humanities

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

none

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Programme Leader

Faculty / School of:

*Arts, Humanities and Cultures; Language Centre, LCS*

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](mailto: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**

did not specify innovation or good practice on LfA&H

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

commented last year on the same content issue as this year. Please see below as addressed in 'Urgent Matters' No 2

**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:

DDSE response to first matter for urgent attention:

We would like to apologise for delays caused by Minerva password lapsing and for the slightly delayed submission of documents by leaders on these programmes. The turnaround is always very tight unfortunately. It is perhaps worth noting that continuing to look at assessments on the morning of the progression board is something that previous and current examiners to Leeds have done for a number of years. We would like to apologise if this expectation was unclear. To accommodate more time for externals on the actual day, the progression board in 2019 will be held later in the afternoon. A room and refreshments will be made available from 9.00 am again and

help with hotel accommodation is given if required. Leaders will be requested to check that external examiners have access to student work on Minerva (or via email if necessary) at the earliest opportunity. This will also include draft marking, which can be made available a week earlier than final assessments. All our external examiners are requested to contact the team with any queries at the earliest opportunity to make the process as smooth as possible.

Programme leader response to second matter for urgent attention:

My comments on that this year are very much the same as last year. The external takes issue with the 'would seem' in our essay title, (see Matters for Attention 2) the topic of our module is thinking. Our aim is not to give students a definition of this is what thinking, or learning, or creative thinking is but that students are going on to subjects where they are expected to think about issues and using readings and experience, which Moon talks about' formulate their own reasoned and supported responses. So we believe that Masters' study is about developing skills of critical analysis, evaluation and judgement in response to issues that will or may arise in students' own professional contexts. Therefore is perhaps correct in saying that we are understanding in a more EAP way as we want the students to experience 'doing thinking' rather learning a prescriptive 'this is what it is' definition of critical thinking. The students are quite accustomed to learning other people's ideas and repeating that very well in their earlier academic life. We are trying to get the students to start thinking about what these issues mean to them, and then how they might change or modify or strengthen those ideas through a consideration (thinking) about other sources. The texts are vehicles, as they will always be on A&H programmes, to aid the students' own thinking processes.

DDSE response to first matter for urgent attention:

As the programme is under new leadership in 2019, the newly appointed lead, , has been asked to carefully consider all comments and to share them with the academic lead from department. In this way, will be able to respond fully to any remaining concerns 2019.

#### **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:*

### **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:*

### **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:*

**Other comments**

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

**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

English for Academic Purposes

Programme(s) / Module(s):

ELU 3011 Language for Education

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

N/A

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Programme Leader: Language for Education

Faculty / School of:

Arts Humanities and Cultures; Language Centre

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](mailto: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**

The students making individual presentations in group structures was a new element this year. Pedagogically the intention was to get the groups to communicate among themselves in order to agree content, structure and shared relevance. Organisationally the intended benefit was that assessing 26 groups of 4 was more manageable for the 8 teachers than assessing over 100 individual presentations. I was glad to see the comment from the External stating 'I believe the group presentations represent a realistic task that students are likely to meet on their degree programmes'.

The assessed essay titles were reviewed and revised this year by the Strand Leader and the School Academic Lead. The aim was to ensure that the tasks matched the relevant lecture content and core reading. The External commented that 'The essay titles are...extremely relevant', which suggests that a positive change was achieved. There was also a slight enhancement attempted of the assessed reflective task which also drew positive comment from the External stating that 'it represents the kind of activity that is becoming increasingly common, especially on Education degree programmes'.

In this my last year as Strand Leader I am very satisfied to read the comment stating 'I believe that the Language for Education module provides a very good example of a content-led English for Academic Purposes module'.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

N/A as no comment from External, but see *Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice* above

**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:

DDSE response to first matter for urgent attention:

We would like to apologise for delays caused by Minerva password lapsing and for the slightly delayed submission of documents by leaders on these programmes. The turn around is always very tight unfortunately. It is perhaps worth noting that continuing to look at assessments on the morning of the progression board is something that

previous and current examiners to Leeds have done for a number of years. We would like to apologise if this expectation was unclear. To accommodate more time for externals on the actual day, the progression board in 2019 will be held later in the afternoon. A room and refreshments will be made available from 9.00 am again and help with hotel accommodation is given if required. Leaders will be requested to check that external examiners have access to student work on Minerva (or via email if necessary) at the earliest opportunity. This will also include draft marking, which can be made available a week earlier than final assessments. All our external examiners are requested to contact the team with any queries at the earliest opportunity to make the process as smooth as possible.

**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:*

All relevant statements regarding Standards received a positive response with the addition of the comment that 'the modules compare well with similar content-led pre-sessional programmes I have taught on and assess either in my role as an External Examiner or as a BALEAP Assessor. Both programmes provide appropriate and clearly articulated Intended Learning Outcomes' and 'it is evident that both modules have been influenced by current thinking in relation to EAP'. I have no further comments.

## 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:*

All statements regarding Assessment and Feedback received a positive response with the addition of the comments that 'the design and structure of the assessment methods and the arrangements for the marking of modules and classification of awards are very good. I was particularly impressed by the assessment descriptors, which give a very clear visual representation and represent excellent practice. I was also very impressed by the standard of marking and level of feedback across the two modules' and 'the academic standards demonstrated by the students are comparable with those of students on similar programmes with which I am familiar'. I have no further comments.

## 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:*

All relevant statements regarding the Progression and Awards Process received a positive response with the exception of Questions 28 and 32 to which the response was 'No' as they relate to the very brief turnaround time provided and to the role of the External Examiner.

## Other comments

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

N/A