

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

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 15/10/2018

**Part A: General Information**

**Subject area and awards being examined**

*Title and Name of Examiner:*

*Faculty / School of:*

Language Centre

*Subject(s):*

*Pre-sessional: Law*  
*Pre-sessional: Communication and Society*

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

*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 remain impressed by the ambitious discipline-specific, content-driven approach to Pre-sessional provision evident in these courses and can see how both programmes are continuing to evolve and improve. The overall approach remains inspiring and sector-leading.

Assessments are focused on productive tasks (such as essays, presentations and seminars) that reflect the sorts of genres students will be asked to produce in their departments. This is the most effective and appropriate approach to assessment on these types of courses.

**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 key challenge for both programmes is to ensure that the academic content does not overwhelm the EAP instruction, or the overall focus on academic language and literacy development. In my last report, particularly for the Law provision, I commented on the need for more space for EAP instruction and for the curriculum and materials to be further developed to allow more EAP input. On both programmes, the number of academic content 'blocks' has been reduced, and on the Law course, there has been effective review of curriculum and materials in an effort to refine and re-balance the EAP input. Both courses make effective use of the academic content in their EAP material, and this is something that should continue to be developed.

**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*

N/A

**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 / N
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y / N
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y / N

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

The programmes are appropriately structured to ensure the learning outcomes are met. As mentioned above, the content-led approach taken on these courses is sector-leading. Although the Law and Communication and Society courses start from the same content-driven premise, the overall structure has allowed them to develop course structures and assessments most appropriate for their disciplines; another benefit of the overall approach to course structure.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
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*Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)*

Research in the field of EAP emphasises the need for discipline-specific instruction. On large scale Pre-session programmes this has typically been regarded as difficult to achieve due to the constraints imposed by scale and lack of cooperation from academic departments. However, using scale as an opportunity to sub-divide the Pre-session into multiple discipline-orientated programmes, and having 'top-down' buy-in from academic departments has enabled the creation of discipline-specific courses directly relevant to students. This is an innovative approach, in line with scholarship the field, and a credit to the institution.

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
<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>Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The case brief and essay is an effective task and produced some good work. However, there were a higher than expected number of plagiarism issues and I wonder if this was related to the tightness of the task and the limited space for student's own 'voice' or critical analysis. The task leads students to description and there is a very short reading list (deliberately). The course leader and I agree that broadening the reading list, and offering a more 'open' essay question, as well as mitigating against plagiarism, would encourage students to take a more critical approach to the task and allow them the opportunity to develop their skills in the position-driven writing so essential in Law.</li> <li>The seminar task worked well and students were well-prepared and clearly inspired by the strong content focus.</li> </ul> <p>Communication and Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment tasks were highly relevant, and the design of the essay question, which requires students to apply a theory to an issue/controversy which interests them, strongly mitigates against plagiarism. It also produced interesting, critical work.</li> <li>The group presentations worked well and showed high levels of student engagement as well as effective presentation skills</li> <li>There was extensive teacher support on the VLE which would aided the effective delivery of the programme.</li> </ul>		
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

*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 work was of a good standard and comparable with students at a similar level in my own institution. Work at the top of the mark scale is impressive, particularly on the Communication and Society programme.

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

Working with material of this complexity, often with new, relatively inexperienced teachers means that teacher induction should be given as much attention as course design. Many of the teachers will have no experience of discipline-focused EAP of this kind, and most likely little familiarity with the discipline area within which they are working. This presents real challenges for teaching and assessing. It is therefore important to ensure that the core EAP concepts underlying the programme (e.g. what do we mean by 'argumentation' in Law? Do we all have a shared language to describe the language and concepts being delivered?) are sharply defined within the programme and communicated clearly to teachers. In addition, consideration should be given on how teachers can best be supported in working with the academic content. Although there is currently a week-long induction for all staff, a review of how this is delivered and what it includes may be useful. It may also be useful to consider how staff are then supported for the duration of the programme.

#### 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>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**

**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 Communication and Society

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Programme Leader

Faculty / School of:

*Language Centre*

Address for communication:

Language Centre Reception  
15 Blenheim Terrace  
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](mailto: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****Language for Communication and Society:**

We are indeed very fortunate that our Academic lead is very enthusiastic and sympathetic to our course. understands and appreciates what we are trying to achieve and works very closely and cooperatively with us for the benefit of the students they will receive into their department and also sees how their involvement at this stage benefits their teaching staff. It is particularly evident to the students that our two teams work closely together in the final symposium and is a very positive end to our course and hand-over to the department. Without this level of understanding and cooperation, our course would be much less rich.

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

It was very pleasing that the External Examiner viewed all the enhancements made this year positively. In particular we agree that removing the third block of academic content from the summative writing assessment worked well. We are also delighted that the introduction of a specific question to the group oral assessment made the reflective element of the presentation task clear, explicit and engaging since we understand the value of reflective practice and feel it an important aspect of our course's ethos and pedagogy.

**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:*

## 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**

The External Examiner raised a very pertinent point about the induction process for staff new to EAP. It is very difficult to physically fit in all the required training and support for staff new to EAP and even for staff new to EAP in Leeds as it is different from other establishments because of the content-based approach taken. It is also difficult to induct teachers who are already teaching on the ten-week programmes as they have marking and teaching commitments on those courses, and this year the limited time for training and induction was eaten into still further because of the conference day. However, overall feedback indicates that the conference was seen as valuable, especially by fixed term contract holders. Timing will be carefully considered for 2019.

In addition, issues highlighted in the report continue to be addressed; the DSE is working on an early career development scheme, an online induction for tutors is also currently being developed, and less experienced EAP teachers demonstrating potential will be offered 10 week contracts to participate in training and observations in the first 4 weeks before the more challenging content-based delivery commences. To address the issue of workload for 10 week tutors on SS&A programmes, formative assessment has been reviewed and will be reduced, bringing the programme in line with other 10 week programmes on which tutors did not report undue stress on their workload during the second induction week. This will be monitored and reviewed carefully again in 2019.

We have revised our materials in order to incorporate substantial teacher support but the evidence gathered from buzz and formal observations this year suggests that this was still not sufficient for some teachers to grasp the essence of EAP as we understand it here in Leeds.

The comments made regarding the assessment types mitigating against plagiarism are very interesting and have provided much food for thought for us and we have reflected about this in some depth since our moderation. The conclusion we have arrived at is that this is one factor in a package of other factors on our course which all together seem to mitigate against plagiarism. However, this is something which we will continue to monitor on an on-going basis.

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

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

*English language pre-sessionals*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Language for Law

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Programme Leader

Faculty / School of:

*Language Centre*

Address for communication:

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**Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice**

Thank you

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

Thank you



## 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:*

Thank you for the very useful feedback on the task. In discussion with the academic we will be changing the task slightly to allow the students to take a clear and critical position in terms of the law's development in the area of privacy law. We will also be adjusting the reading list to give the student the sources to allow them to take a position in relation to the question and develop their argumentation and analysis skills. In this way we hope to scaffold and develop the student's ability to critically analyse the law and mitigate against plagiarism

In terms of teacher induction, again thank you for this input, I will implement a more focused induction week, which will hopefully be followed up with weekly meetings and chime with the materials. These discussions will try to clarify key concepts/themes that are in the law content and in the EAP materials. Hopefully, this will provide greater support for teachers and ensure we are on the same page (or at least the same chapter) in how we understand and teach key concepts, and how they are reflected in the materials. I think the teachers would really appreciate this and as a strand leader it is good opportunity to check and refine my own understanding.

## 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:*

No specific points to address.

## Other comments

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