

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 24/10/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science

Subject(s):

Theology and Religious Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Religious Studies and Global Development
 MA Religion and Public Life
 MA Theology and Religious Studies

THEO5100M Contemporary Issues in Religion and Gender 7
 THEO5175M Muslims, Multiculturalism and the State 4
 THEO5325M Religion and Society: Research Process and Methods 4
 THEO5355M Religion, Society and Public Life 7
 THEO5420M Research Project (Theology and Religious Studies) 1
 THEO5620M Special Options in Theology and Religious Studies
 THEO5580M Dissertation
 THEO5900M Theology & Religious Studies: Extended Dissertation

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

MA

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.

Good practice to send responses to all EEs for the MA programmes in the subject area to see similarities/differences in contiguous subject areas.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

None to specifically note.

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 NA

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 - NA

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
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 Programme has not been through any significant changes since my last report. I can confirm that the overall programme structure is robustly designed with appropriate aims and LOs.

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)

It is evident that research interests of tutors informs the curriculum. Equally, expectations for students to use current research to inform their assignments is evident throughout.

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
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

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:

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.

As noted in previous years – Yes.

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
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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> <p>Student achievement is comparable with the performance of student undertaking Level 7 work on similar programmes.</p> <p>There was no evidence of unexpected variance in performance of this cohort of students.</p>		
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

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?	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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>I was provided with clear responses to my queries about whether EEs should see assessment titles and the number of extensions provided to students from last year's EE report.</p> <p>The administrator for these programmes was efficient and helpful in all aspects of my work.</p>		

Any questions I had about student progression and marks for this year's cohort were dealt with effectively

Other comments

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

Access to VLE and scripts: this was an issue for my role in UG external examining. As the University has changed its IT security policy I was not able to access the VLE, I was sent mark sheets and marking reports in one set of files and then sent scripts separately. This system needs review.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Theology and Religious Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Religious Studies and Global Development
MA Religion and Public Life
MA Theology and Religious Studies

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

MA Director – Theology & Religious Studies 2017-18

Faculty / School of:

Philosophy, Religion and History of Science

Address for communication:

University of Leeds
Botany House
LS2 9JT LEEDS

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

We note the examiner's appreciation of our practice to send responses to all EEs for the MA programmes in the subject area to see similarities/differences in contiguous subject areas.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The examiner correctly does not note any particular enhancements, as last year's review did not require any.

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:

We appreciate the examiner's conclusion that there are no matters for urgent attention.

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 appreciate that the examiner believes our programmes are of an adequate standard and that the structure of robustly designed. We also note that the examiner is positive about the research-led teaching in our MA

programmes, both through tutors' research interests shaping the curriculum, and students engaging with current research.

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 examiner is satisfied with our methods and procedures of assessment, and has not perceived any evidence of unexpected variance in performance of this cohort of students.

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 appreciate the examiner's positive evaluation of our progression and awards process, and note positive experience with our handling of any queries had and with the support received.

Other comments

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

The examiner raised an issue in the pre-Board summative report concerning the mark for a re-submitted plagiarised essay which appeared not to have been uncapped. This appears to have been a misunderstanding or misreading of the mark-sheet. The essay in question did have a capped mark of 50 but the student actually only achieved a mark of 38. We will make sure this is clear on mark-sheets in the future should a similar situation arise.

The examiner raised concerns in comments regarding access to the University VLE system and having repeated problems with their accounts. asked if this could be looked at in the future as external examiner access to the VLE should not be such a difficult process.

We are committed to resolve this in future years as the issue has been raised before at UG level. The decision to grant externals access to our VLE system was a central one but changes to data protection laws have added to the difficulties.

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 18/02/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science	
Religion, History and Philosophy of Science	
PRHS5085M	Concepts of God
PRHS5075M	Philosophy and Spiritual Practice
THEO5030M	Sin, Public Discourse, and Public Life
THEO5370M	Theology and Public Life
THEO5420M	Research Project (Theology and Religious Studies)
THEO5580M	Dissertation
THEO5900M	Theology & Religious Studies: Extended Dissertation
THEO5620M	Special Options in Theology and Religious Studies

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.

I was not required to attend the examination board for the postgraduate programme

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
Since I was abroad last year I did not examine any of the postgraduate scripts in 2017

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

No matters for urgent attention

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
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 feedback offered by the internal markers has consistently been thorough and (from the students' point of view) very helpful; the detailed comments provide ample justification as to how the final mark had been awarded. The variety of topics chosen in the essays and dissertations was impressive in its diversity. There seems to have been a progressive enhancement in the teaching provision from year to year, while the standard has generally been consistently high, and the assessment methods have been perfectly satisfactory.

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 design and structure of the programme seems entirely satisfactory, and the aims and ILOs were in line with the national benchmarks for the subjects concerned.

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 research interests of the individual module leaders have been fed into the modules which they supervised and examined; students were clearly encouraged to conduct their own research and there was evidence of some original and innovative thinking in some of the scripts examined.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N/A
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<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
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)?	Y / N N/A
<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> The programme design did satisfactorily align the intended learning outcomes with the 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
<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> The overall standard was commensurate with that at other institutions of HE at which I have examined. Students who were awarded merit on the Masters programme tended to provide accounts which were too descriptive and lacking in detailed critique. But most of the scripts which I saw were well written and well structured, and some were deservedly awarded a distinction.		
<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?	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/A
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?	N/A
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	N/A
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>I was provided with enough assessed work to ensure that the overall examining by the first and second internal examiners was fair. Indeed, the feedback provided for the students was generally very thorough and covered both the main issues that needed to be addressed and more tangential issues, such as stylistic points and overall presentation.</p>		

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

QAT Received 13/06/2019

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Theology & Religious Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Programmes:
MA in Religions and Public Life
MA in Religious Studies and Global Development
Modules:
PRHS5075M Philosophy and Spiritual Practice
PRHS5085M Concepts of God
THEO5030M Sin, Public Discourse and Public Life
THEO5370M Theology and Public Life
THEO5420M Research project (TRS)
THEO5580M Dissertation
THEO5900M Theology & Religious Studies: extended Dissertation
THEO5620M Special Options in Theology & Religious Studies

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

AHC/PRHS

Address for communication:

PRHS

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

As _____ notes, _____ was not required to be present at the MA Exam Board in October, 2018. However, there was some external presence at the Board, as _____ was able to join us via Skype.

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:

We are pleased to note that _____ has observed improvements in the programmes during time as external examiner, particularly in terms of teaching enhancement, and that _____ commends the quality of feedback provided to the students. Following a critical comment from one external in the 2016 examinations, it was made clear to markers that both first and second marker's reports should provide significant feedback and justify the marks given.

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 please note commendation of the extent to which research interests of staff are reflected in module content, and of the evidence of independent research in the students' work.

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 note _____ observation that some of the work marked at merit level were more descriptive than evaluative. The Taught Postgraduate grading criteria for the merit band 60-9 are as follows:

Analysis and Reflection	Structure	Use of Sources	Style and presentation	Relevant Methods
Critical review and synthesis of ideas, showing independence of thought Coherent and mainly persuasive argument Thorough, sustained appraisal of implications, with some consideration of objections and alternatives	Clear structure, appropriate to the topic No significant omissions or repetition	Accurate exposition Clear and critical coverage of relevant sources, going beyond the course materials Sustained good understanding of topic	Clear, academic writing style Skilled and consistent use of referencing conventions Very few typographical errors Effective use of permitted length Any tables, figures, etc. presented appropriately	Coherent and persuasive rationale for methodology Good research design, with critical analysis of data

The descriptors under 'Analysis and Reflection' clearly signal the importance of independent critical thought. However, as with undergraduate work, a particularly strong performance under some of the other headings (such as 'Use of Sources') may compensate to some extent for lack of independence. Nevertheless, we recognise that a completely uncritical essay would not meet the criteria for merit. We will emphasise to markers the need to refer to the School grading criteria.

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 pleased to note that _____ confirms the fairness of the examining.

Other comments

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

It may be of interest to note that, following a review of our MA portfolio, the MAs in Religious Studies and Global Development and in Religions and Public Life are to be withdrawn wef 2019-20, and replaced by a new MA in Religion, Politics & Society, which will contain both Global Development and Gender pathways. The MA in Theology & Religious Studies and the online MA in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics are to remain.

As 2017-18 was _____ last year as MA external examiner, we would like to take this opportunity to thank him very much for _____ work and for all the constructive comments and advice he has provided over the last few years.