

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 30/06/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Design

Subject(s):

Textile Design

Programme(s) / Module(s):

DESN1175 Green Design
DESN1560 Design for Textiles 1B
DESN1561 Design for Textiles 1C
DESN1575 Patterns and Culture
DESN1633 Colour and the Design Process
DESN1820 Design History: 1900 to the Present Day
DESN2170 Knitted Fabric Tech for Design
DESN2180 Garment Tech for Knitwear
DESN2564 Design for Textiles 2A
DESN2565 Design for Textiles: Specialism
DESN2633 Colour: Art and Science
DESN3342 Visual Research & Analysis
DESN3343 Critical Studio Journal
DESN3656 Computer Aided Design and Professional Design Presentation
DESN3566 Design for Textiles 3

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

BA

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.

The progress of student abilities to produce professional and commercial design collections from DESN3342 Visual Research and Analysis to DESN3566 Design for Textiles 2, is supported by the clear expectations provided in the module documents that outline requirements for student engagement and feedback points in the curriculum. It should be noted that all students, across the grade range successfully produce industry-ready portfolios of design work as a result of the framework of practice that the staff have provided.

Students again commented positively about the staff support during their studies and their excellent pastoral care and guidance on future careers options. Efforts to develop students oral skills during the course of study means that all students I spoke to could clearly and confidently articulate the aims of their projects, their future ambitions and reflect on the challenges they encountered during their major project. The organisation and structure for tutorial support for DESN3360 Dissertation clearly benefits from the breadth of academic input and support available, thus leading to research on topics that are both relevant, and evidence student interest in modules already taken during their studies. There are also several examples where students' projects articulate their future ambitions for further study or within the industry.

The use of the VLE for DESN2633 should be noted as an excellent example of how staff research interests link and support the module delivery. The link to the academics blog on colour and the clearly organised module contents has resulted in student essay submissions that demonstrate a wide range of approaches to the assessment question and an extensive use of references.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Reintroduction of the weave pathway in year one is already producing some excellent outcomes and I would hope to see several students take this as their specialism for the remainder of the course, as they have demonstrated good skills in thinking through design into structures.

DESN3566 outcomes for print specialists have benefited from the now established support of the technician in this area, and also due to their access to develop ideas on cloth as part of DESN3342. Colour and design realisation have generally benefited from these changes.

The refresh of visual studies in DESN5160 Design for Textiles module has provided students with structured delivery of key skills and produced some very well developed outcomes. It is encouraging to see the students directed to working with the archive and develop their mark making and drawing skills in response to everyday objects.

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 identified

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
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 unique blend of design focused modules and school wide optional studies in design and non-design topics continues to produce graduates with skills that will enable them to enter into a wide range of career options. The rigour and stretch developed through

<p>the dissertation module fulfils the aims to produce students that can apply these skills to their practice and in several cases continue onto PG study at Leeds or at other institutions. Although some students feel at a disadvantage (compared to other Textile Design courses) in the proportion of their studies allocated to design, the majority on reflection appreciate and value their choice of the University of Leeds and the options that they can study. The programme structure works effectively and any changes implemented support the continued aims of the subject area.</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>Staff specific to the BA Textile Design course work closely with students on projects associated with their research interests (Digital Knit exhibition) and several curriculum developments are linked closely to their pedagogic research (oral feedback strategies, class online discussion rooms). DESN2633 Colour Art & Science delivery is clearly informed by current research in this area and students across all art and design courses successfully relate this to their own research themes. The dissertation module DESN3360 continues to produce in-depth enquiry and currency of research topic, clearly supported by all staff and their research interests. I would hope that development of student interests in weave (thinking, methodologies, futures) will evolve as the course continues to develop as this is under represented at present. The introduction of a module relative to the weave specialism (constructed textiles), to develop student understanding of the potential of this specialism (3d, smart material, architectural, special) would support research interests in this area to complement the knit and digital print areas.</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> <p>Students have developed a very good understanding of research methodologies through DESN3360 Dissertation and are supported in their academic writing in this and other modules including DESN1820, DESN1633, and DES2633. The environment and research interests of the academic pool at the University are readily available for students to engage with during their studies on this programme. I would suggest that there are 1 or 2 students in each cohort whose ambitions and abilities lie in continuing to PhD study.</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>		

Assessment tasks are clearly aligned with the learning outcomes for the programme and these are articulated in accessible language in the briefs for each module.

Assessment methods are used effectively to test student understanding using a variety of methods through their studies. The use of Multiple Choice Quizzes (MCQ) in modules such as DESN2633 provides the students with an opportunity for immediate feedback on their progress against the ILO's. The student performance for the subsequent essay element of this module (with grades between 59% - 76%) evidences the success of this approach to assessment within one module.

Design specific modules follow the UK wide approach to the assessment of practice- based work, where a mix of components are submitted including written reports, visual studies, technical information, design development and visualisations. Excellent results (80% of students attained a First class or 2.1 classification overall) evidences the quality of teaching provided for DESN3342 and then in DESN3566 Design for Textiles 3 and in the detailed and constructive feedback provided by all staff. Additional verbal/visual (recorded) feedback for students in digital print design considers alternate methods that may well suit students who prefer oral feedback to written.

The use of alternative (visual) methods of assessment in DES2180 Garment Technology for Knitwear resulted in some interesting uses of photography and illustration by students to complete the task and demonstrate their knowledge. DESN3342 Visual Research and Analysis clearly sets out the expectations of the assessment and uses interim feedback to indicate grade band for each criteria. Clear progression from interim to final grades are demonstrated and with the exception of to non-submissions all students achieved from 52% - 78%.

Marking is consistent across all of the modules included and briefs clearly state when feedback will happen.

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

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:

This cohort of students demonstrated clear strengths in their professional approach to both the execution and the presentation of their projects. That understanding of the fashion and textiles industry is clearly evidenced, and they are able to articulate both the challenges and opportunities for them to contribute to the future of the sector. The mix of academic and studio-based modules provides students on BA Textile Design with a unique skill set not provided by other institutions, and the majority understand how this opens up a broader range of career opportunities for them. Their research and critical analysis as demonstrated in their dissertation and written reports (and the excellent results attained), provides them with a clear pathway into postgraduate research. In particular the standards achieved in commercial collections of digital print design, and the development of Shima Knitwear skills related to performance sportswear are strengths seen in this student cohort. Due to the small size of this particular cohort and the proportion of the degree that focuses on the design element, the creative output cannot be easily compared to other institutions where design is the main focus. In discussion with the students at my final visit I tried to manage their expectations around this aspect of their studies and we explored their strengths in comparison to other courses. The technical knowledge, which underpins the work of both the digital printers and the knit specialists, will enable them to work effectively within an industry context. The strength of the placement provision and the range of opportunities taken up by this cohort in their 3rd year have further strengthened this aspect of their knowledge.

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

Feedback consistently provides detailed and constructive comments especially for the design and dissertation modules. Feedback and in line comments for exam papers is suitably detailed, and has improved over the last academic year.

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?	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
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?	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?	Y

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

The arrangements for both the interim and final visit were well organised and enabled me to meet the majority of students and thus track their progress from term 1 to term 2. Students were happy to engage in feed back regarding their studies and the support from staff, and this provides me with a valuable insight into the course and the way in which it is functioning. An increase in the number of exam annotated exam scripts was encouraging and I hope that students make use of this feedback (beyond the grade itself). The range of subjects viewed for the dissertation module was appropriate and allowed good opportunity to see the links that many students make between this and their final major project collections.

Other comments

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

DESN1561 Design for Textiles 1 (knit) should be congratulated on providing a clear and detailed structure for self-directed study as well as in-class workshops.

Studio & constructed workshop facilities are somewhat diminished for the textile students following the refurbishment of the Clothworkers building and this may see an impact on the opportunities for knit and weave students to develop their work to the expected levels. It is also important that students have a sense of community and a home base (studio) that encourages them to drop in with reasonable levels of light and space. A note to keep an eye on the parity of support across the course, and develop mechanisms to encourage weaker students to attend and thus support them in their design work

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)*Title and Name of Examiner:**Subject(s):*

Textile Design

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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 DESN3343 Critical Studio Journal
 DESN3656 Computer Aided Design and Professional Design Presentation
 DESN3566 Design for Textiles 3

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

BA

*Title and Name of Responder:**Position*:*

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Design

Address for communication:

Clothworkers' Central Building
 University of Leeds
 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

Thank you very much for providing an insightful and supportive report. We were delighted to read your comments on the quality of students' portfolios, and their ability to identify appropriate research questions.

We will continue to develop strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills in our students and encourage them to use these in both their academic studies and their design development and solutions.

Thank you also for identifying the VLE area for DESN2633 as a significant example of good practice. We will discuss how we can introduce this format into the VLE area for other modules, including a staff research folder will enable students to access research outputs more easily.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We were very pleased to read your assessment of the changes we have implemented in DESN1560, Design for Textiles will continue to develop this key area. We plan to further develop the visual research provision for all students following the success of DESN 1560 in 2018/2019. Extra provision was trialled in DESN 2565 (semester 2) this year with some success but was met with resistance from a minority of students who disliked a challenge to their working practice. We anticipate that continuing into level two with the same visual research methodology started in level one will be less problematic for the weaker students. The change will be communicated clearly to returning students.

We were also delighted with your comments on technical support for print specialists and the re-introduction of the weave pathway.

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:

Thank you for confirming that there were no matters requiring 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:

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 for your positive comments about the unique structure of the Textiles course in Leeds and the broad portfolio of skills to which this gives access. We were delighted to read this confirmation that Leeds graduates are well prepared for both industry and further study.

As you point out, some students do feel disadvantaged because the Leeds curriculum allocates less credits to design than other Textile Design degrees. We are in the process of reviewing our curriculum and it is likely that the number of design credits in Year 2 will increase slightly; this will allow our students to develop a broader portfolio of design work without sacrificing the unique characteristics of the BA Textiles programme.

We were very pleased to read your comments on the embedding of staff research (pedagogic as well as design research) in the curriculum.

Your comments on further developing students' interests in weave – and the possibility of developing a new module in this area were of great interest. We will discuss this with the current lead in the weave area.

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 confirming that assignment tasks were well explained and well aligned with the learning outcomes for the programme, and also for highlighting the effectiveness of formative feedback in enhancing the final grades achieved.

We are very proud of our use of audio-feedback, which is also provided in the Structured pathway, but thank you for also drawing our attention to the effectiveness of automated feedback as provided by MCQ exercises. We are always striving to improve the feedback we provide for our students and are keen to use technology where appropriate.

Thank you also for confirming that marking was consistent across all the modules you reviewed. We were delighted to hear that the annotation of exam papers has improved and we will continue to encourage students to make use of this feedback by booking appointments to review their paper with members of staff.

Your recognition that a degree in Textiles from Leeds provides a unique skill set, and that this skill set is will serve students will in an employment context, was greatly appreciated.

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:

Thank you for confirming that your visits were well organised and that you had access to sufficient material to make an informed review of the programme.

Other comments

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

We were delighted with your positive comments about the self-directed study resources for DESN1561 again this can be implemented in the weave area allowing the students to develop with independence and less staff involvement.

You raised two concerns for our further reflection:

- The necessity of providing a base room for students where they can get on with their work and enjoy a sense of community. This is also a concern for the Textiles team and we continue to work with the School management to resolve this.
- The need to ensure that weaker and less engaged students are encouraged to attend and supported in their design work

We have given both these matters serious consideration. The lack of a textiles community has been noted with the change in space allocated to Textile Design. This has impacted on the attendance of the weaker students and their ability to be positively influenced by their peers. As a team we will consider how we can support these students who we have noted tend to be level 3 students who have not taken a year in industry option.