

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 06/08/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Design

Subject(s):

Art and Design International Foundation

Programme(s) / Module(s):

DESN0010 Visual Research and Drawing
 DESN0020 Materials, Media and Processes
 DESN0030 Understanding Design
 DESN0040 Personal Study

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.

Staff have implemented changes to assessments that have enabled students to better understand what is required of them.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Workshop sessions in the colour lab have been introduced for the fashion/textiles project that improved student engagement with the module and impacted positively on their understanding of the importance of colour in design.

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

For Examiners in the first year of appointment only

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 only

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
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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

There have been some issues with recruitment that compromised delivery in the past, with a large number of Chinese students in particular who did not have sufficient background in Art and Design to full engage with the programme. This meant that progression was compromised and students from other parts of the world had a less rounded studio experience than they might. This year the staff have made further adjustments to the programme, including more workshop time and some more guidance on assessment and expectations, resulting in a far better experience and set of results. It is worth noting however that recruitment remains as an important issue, ensuring that students present their own work for portfolio assessment and that their level of English on entry is suitable for the academic rigour of the University of Leeds. I have found the staff to be committed and fair in assessments during my tenure as External Examiner, and concerned that students find the right destination for their further study.

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 course is well structured giving a broad introduction to the various aspects of Art and Design that students are able to progress to at Undergraduate Study at the University of Leeds, with the exception of 3D. The balance of students on the programme that have not had a sound art education before arrival can impact severely on the management of the year, and so the staff have to be agile in adapting to the needs of the cohort. This year the students have been more engaged than previously observed, this could be an indication of the shifts in trends in China or simply a fortunately 'switched on' group. For students from IB or equivalent experience the course suits their level well and enables them to make informed decisions about their chosen undergraduate programme.

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)

Students are required to research art history movements and contemporary practitioners for both academic and practice-based modules. Researching into fashion and colour trends has been introduced to the programme this year.

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
<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>Assignments and assessments are well constructed with appropriate time allowed for formative feedback during the schedule. Staff are open and honest about likely progression and manage student expectations well and fairly.</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> <p>Assignments and assessments are in line with foundation courses from similar institutions, although the level of workshop time has been less available in the past. This year the introduction to the colour lab enabled students to gain more practical skills and for them to make valuable connections with design and marketing in textiles. An increase in workshop time for other areas would be beneficial especially as some students come without the basic investigative skills developed through GCSE and A level study. This could enhance the students' ability to experiment and take risks.</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?	N
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?	NA
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	NA
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	NA

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?	NA
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i> I attended the module board and not the Awards Board.</p>		

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):

Art and Design International Foundation

Programme(s) / Module(s):

DESN0010 Visual Research and Drawing
DESN0020 Materials, Media and Processes
DESN0030 Understanding Design
DESN0040 Personal Study

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

Foundation Year

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

AHC, 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) must be sent 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

Thank you very much for your encouraging report and for your support and advice over the last few years. We were delighted to read your remarks on the clarity of assessment briefs. All project briefs are now clearly in line with the module learning outcomes. The module requirements are now reinforced as part of the weekly project tasks. Over the past three years we have refined our use of language in the project briefs and assignments to make them as clear as possible for students for whom English is not their first language. For example in DESN 0040 Independent Study, the students wrote an essay based on the lecture series, rather than an informed historical and contemporary commentary, based on their studio practice as they did in the previous year. The essay question included clear instructions on how to interpret the subject content and allowed them to select specific art and design movements to write about. The more structured essay provided the students with a clear framework to write against. The majority of the students achieved good/very good scores that I attribute to clear assignment and assessment instructions.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We were pleased that you could see benefits arising from the workshop sessions in the colour lab. I have included a summary of the enhancements made to the module DESN 0030. This year we were fortunate to have additional subject specialist teaching from _____ in fashion design/marketing and _____ from Fashion Technology. I was able to rewrite the fashion and textiles project. The project was refocused on colour trend forecasting for fashion. The visual research was linked to the student's current studies in art and design history via DESN 0040. Students selected historical and contemporary examples of Fine Art and Design as inspiration for their colour trend boards and laboratory work in colour matching. The colour matching took place in the School of Design textile technology laboratories. This was a great opportunity for the students to experience the colour technology facilities in the School and provide in an insight into the undergraduate experience on the BA course in Fashion Technology. The quality of the portfolio work was excellent and comparable with that of the work produced by the undergraduate design students. The students appeared to enjoy the varied contributions from science/technology, art and design history. I believe students and staff enjoyed the cross-curriculum experience.

The School has a great deal of expertise in textiles and fashion technology and is currently looking at how best to

capitalise on these skills and resources at undergraduate level. I recommend further cross discipline projects could be developed in IFY programme in particular to further accommodate fashion marketing and technology.

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:

Not applicable

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 agree with your observation that careful recruitment is critical to the success of this programme and will continue to view portfolios as well as checking students' level of English on entry. We also acknowledge that increasing the time that students spend in a workshop environment enhances both their experience and achievement.

We were delighted with your comments on the fairness of assessment and staff concern for the academic development and progression of students. We agree with your observation that cohorts vary greatly in their readiness for study and that problems can arise if a significant number of students lack the expected grounding in Art and Design.

During the past two academic years, the two previous cohorts struggled to cope with both the adjustment to full time art and design education, their ability to time manage and in their readiness to undertake a programme of study delivered in spoken and written English. This cohort of students had good spoken and written English and a willingness to learn and engage in the studio sessions. In addition, the majority had greater skills in art and design practice than we had seen in previous years. As a result the group were able to develop their studio practice and writing to a very good standard and were ultimately better prepared for undergraduate study.

In 2018-19 all applicants to the programme were given portfolio guidelines prior to the submission of their electronic portfolio submissions. Initially many applicants struggled to follow the portfolio guidelines and were rejected accordingly. However, towards the end of the admissions process applicants were beginning to make portfolio submissions in line with the School of Design IFY guidelines.

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 comment about the structure of the course. Regarding the inclusion of three-dimensional studies in the course. We currently include three-dimensional object making as part of DESN 0020. This activity could be undertaken in the School of Design sculpture studio next year, assuming we can secure time in the space. It may be possible to offer a sculpture project option in DESN 0030 in place of one of the current options. If that were the case the module would need to be adjusted accordingly for 2020 – 21.

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 were delighted to read that in your opinion assessment was fair and comparable with other institutions, and that feedback was helpful and honest. We were glad that you could see clear benefits deriving from the introduction of the colour lab. We will be considering additional enhancements to the student experience in the coming year.

In 2017, the university of Leeds Internal Foundation Year office introduced a university wide learning and teaching committee to deal with all matters relating to IFY programmes, modules, assessment, feedback, examination and recruitment. The committee is comprised of representation from all the IFY subject leads with the aim of standardising learning and teaching provision. Since the introduction of the committee all learning and teaching decision-making is considered initially at IFY level and then locally at School learning and teaching committee for comments. This committee is in the early stages of its development, so at the time that this report was written any of your issues relating to the process of learning and teaching are now under review by the new committee. The new subject lead for the School of Design is now _____ and will be working in conjunction with them in establishing a new framework for the IFY provision at the University of Leeds.

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:

I can confirm that the school is working with the University's Director of International Foundation Year to improve the way in which the examination boards that consider Foundation Year students are run. Please see response to assessment and feedback.

Other comments

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

Finally, I would like to thank you for your support and advice over the last three years your feedback and suggestions have led to valuable developments within the programme.