

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 26/11/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

English

Subject(s):

English Literature

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA in English Literature – various pathways

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.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

I note the change to an electronic marking system.

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 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 / 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
<p>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<p>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)</p> <p>This is achieved by members of staff having the freedom to design new modular courses out of areas of their own research.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
<p>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
<p>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
<p>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<p>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.</p>		
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
<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>The MA is typical of many in our subject in the UK in that there is a clear division between home students who operate at a high level and will proceed to a PhD and overseas students who may struggle to pass. Two Chinese students failed the course this year. The department has done well in increasing international recruitment but there needs to be good University-level support for such students when they arrive and adjust to a very different academic culture.</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> <p>Assessment and feedback is an area in which the department is very strong. Markers are extremely conscientious and show an excellent level of care and interest in the on-going development of the student in their comments.</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 / 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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p>		

Other comments

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

ONLINE SYSTEM

Work sent from the online system showed internal comments rather than being a clean script. Where a marker makes a lot of comment on a script this is quite disruptive to reading the script. Not sure how this fits with wider policies around anonymisation?

Creative Writing: Marking Criteria

I found it hard to assess the Creative Writing materials I was sent in part because there was no distinct marking criteria for them which meant I was unclear how different creative and critical elements were being rewarded. The lack of a distinctive mark scheme also means that there is greater danger of overmarking here and of student dissatisfaction with marks. I strongly recommend the creation of a new mark scheme – or an adaptation of the core mark scheme for these areas.

DISSERTATIONS

The most unusual dissertation that I read was the one on James Bond and games of card by [redacted] which was really very distinctive and fascinating; the best dissertation for me was that on “The Kiss” in Rossetti (by [redacted]). One query I did have in general for the dissertations concerned the number of texts covered and the range of discussion – which in general tends to be quite narrow at Leeds compared to [redacted]. Of course, doing so is self-penalising in some ways but I wonder if there should be clearer guidelines on this, or a requirement to write on more than one text?

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

MA English Literature & pathways

Programme(s) / Module(s):

See above

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

AHC/ School of English

Address for communication:

School of English
Cavendish Rd

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 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

None identified, which is something the **DSE** and **Dir of PGT Studies** will consider.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The move to the electronic marking protocol is recommended rather than obligatory (see response to 'other comments').

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:

None identified.

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:

No specific points were raised and no comments for questions 12,14,15 and 16. The intellectual freedom and opportunities for research-based module design experienced by colleagues is acknowledged at Qu. 13.

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:

Qu. 19: this academic year (2019-20) targeted workshops are being run within the School to provide additional support for MA students, principally international students. Academic support is also being provided by a dedicated tutor in the Language Centre. This is one School response to its success in increasing international recruitment in line with its International Strategy, and the embedding of international student support is central to that strategy.

Additional comments refer to the excellent and assiduous assessment & feedback practices for the MA.

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 seems to be in order. No specific points were raised.

Other comments

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

Online marking: the protocols are universal rather than School specific, and discussions are under way in the context of the Digital Education strategy to develop/invest in adequate software to maintain expectations with respect to anonymization, ease of use etc.

Marking Criteria: under review.

Creative Writing external examiner: has been appointed.

Number of texts covered and range of discussion: a topic for STSEC led by **DSE** and **Dir PGT Studies and Programme Leader**.