

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

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 19/09/2019

**Part A: General Information**

**Subject area and awards being examined**

*Title and Name of Examiner:*

*Faculty / School of:*

Arts

*Subject(s):*

*English Language*

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

Language for Postgraduate Taught Politics and Society

*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**

*The course is designed with the academic lead for sociology and reflects well the needs of these students going onto the postgraduate programmes in this area. The flipped learning approach with pre and post lesson activities prepares students for what they will have to do on their degree programmes. The seminar style of the lessons also helps develop students' skills in these areas.*

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

*A similar programme was presented last year with a different external examiner who proposed not using a mark for the essay plan which formed 20% of the final grade as she questioned its validity. This has now been removed and only the students' final essays are used in the overall mark.*

**Matters for Urgent Attention**

*None*

**For Examiners in the first year of appointment only**

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	N
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y

**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
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

*The programme is well designed to develop the academic skills students will require on their degree programmes. It is weighted towards academic skills development rather than explicit language teaching. Given the nature of the cohort this is suitable and reflects practice in other similar pre-sessionals. However, students do not need to pass the course to progress onto their degrees and there was a high failure rate; over 50%. It was remarked at the progression board that this may have been due to lack of motivation due to guaranteed progression.*

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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*The curriculum is influenced by current research on the benefits of the concept of flipped learning in EAP.*

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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*All ILOs are reflected in the assessments. However, in some cases this is a little implicit as assessment only consists of two items; an essay and a presentation. This does not allow for direct assessment of students' ability to deal with spoken interaction in groups or less structured formats. Some discussion was had with the module leader*

<i>as to how the assessment could be adapted to be more wide ranging. There was adequate indication of standardisation of markers and evidence of second marking.</i>		
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>The mark given reflected the ability of the students in areas I sampled. Due to the quality of the videos it was in many cases very difficult to make out what students were saying in their presentations. However, for one class I was able to do this but these were all assessed by the same tutor. The weighting of the course towards academic skills may have resulted in slightly lower scores than if the weighting had been more towards linguistic skills. The performance of the students was comparable to other similar institutions.</i>		
<i>The assessments were well annotated by markers and this was helpful in understanding how the final grade was arrived at.</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?	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 / 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
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 / 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**

Whilst I was sent the external examiner's report from a similar course run the year before this report did not include the school's response.

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

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

*English for Academic Purposes*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

ELU3018 Language for Politics and Society

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Module Leader; DSE

Faculty / School of:

*The Language Centre, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies*

Address for communication:

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](mailto: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**

It is appreciated that the flipped learning approach was recognised as good practice as this was a new approach to delivery of the input this year.

There were more seminar style lessons this year, which also seems to have worked well.

Continuing to collaborate with the same academic lead in Sociology has helped to build our working relationship and meant the teaching team and I could benefit from a greater insight into the epistemology of the discipline.

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

The decision not to award a summative grade to the essay plan seemed to be a good one as most students still completed a plan and received peer and tutor feedback on this. It also potentially meant that the final essay mark was not negatively affected by a weak plan. Instead tutors were able to give detailed feedback at the draft stage, which possibly students found more useful.

**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:

I provided last year's external examiner's report on request during the external examiner's visit. It did not have the School's response as I do not have access to this.

We would like to apologise for any oversight in forwarding the response to the previous External Examiner's report and any related documentation. This will be sent along with this response. Please do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything else you require or any further queries you have in this respect.

## 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:*

Our pre-sessional programmes all adopt an embedded academic language and literacies approach as reflected in the learning outcomes and assessment rubrics which all courses in the pre-sessional suite share. Language instruction, therefore, is contextualised and takes place whenever the opportunity arises for discourse analysis of the core reading rather than explicit input.

Motivational reasons may be a factor in the relatively high rate of students who did not meet the language requirements at the end of the course but other factors were also noted in the progression meeting such as the limited discipline background of the students, which makes a content-based programme more challenging for them. This latter factor can be considered in future planning.

## 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:*

I had already identified issues with the validity of the presentation as an assessment of students' spoken English (issues which we did not have the previous year) before the external examiner's visit and this is why I raised it as a point for discussion. I will consider his suggestions in future planning.

Technical ways to address the quality of the recordings were also discussed with the external examiner and will be applied next year.

The observation concerning the possible correlation between the weighting of the course and the linguistic performance of students is an interesting one and is worth considering in future given the typical cohort and the needs of the departments they are progressing to.

## 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:*

It was helpful to have the external examiner present at the progression board.

## Other comments

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

Please see response to questions 1-7.