

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 Research

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

N/A

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

The course is well adapted to the needs of the students. It develops the academic skills they will need for postgraduate research. The essay and presentation topics allow students to practise their skills as potential researchers.

Enhancements made from the previous year

This is the course's first year of presentation.

Matters for Urgent Attention

None

For Examiners in the first year of appointment only

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y
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

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
<p><i>The programme is well written and responsive to the needs of the cohort it addresses. The academic English skills the students need to develop are addressed effectively.</i></p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<p><i>As a skills development course rather than a content based discipline the influence of research on what is taught is not explicit. However, in terms of the implicit teaching methodology many current themes in EAP are apparent, such as collective learning, re-drafting of written work, etc.</i></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>		
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>The assessment consists of an essay and a presentation. The assessments are explicitly linked to the ILOs and all ILOs are covered in the assessment. However, there is no independent assessment of listening and direct assessment of speaking is only by student presentation. Other than questions for the students at the end of the presentations there is no assessment of their ability to deal with spoken interaction and what there is is of a one-to-one rather than a group nature. Whilst these skills are covered in formative assessments these do not contribute to the final mark. From discussions with the module lead it is understood that wider means of assessment are under consideration.</i></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
<i>Apart from three borderline students the cohort exhibited abilities well in excess of those required to pass the programme. In general the cohort performed at a higher level than other postgraduate pre-sessional programmes with which I am familiar.</i>		
<i>The assessment is weighted towards academic skills rather than linguistic abilities. Given the needs of these students this is appropriate.</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?	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
<i>I sampled essays and presentations but was not invited to the progression board. The feedback provided to students on their assessments was very useful in seeing how assessors had arrived at their marks.</i>		

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):

English Language

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Language for Postgraduate Research

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

N/A

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Module Leader; DSE

Faculty / School of:

Arts / The Language Centre (LCS)

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. 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

I am pleased that the examiner highlighted a well-written and responsive programme that addressed the needs of the cohort. I hope we are providing an innovative pre-sessional for our PGR students.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

This is a new module on the summer pre-sessional programmes.

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:

Question 2

There was no previous external examiner report for this module.

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:

Question 13

This is a reasonable observation. I would like to add that, although this is not a content based course, the programme aims to open up the discourses of research and research communities to participants in a deeper way than is suggested solely by skills development. We also aim to prepare them for the discipline-specific demands of their own areas through individualised task content.

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:

Question 17

A review of assessments is planned for 2019/20. Discussion about the best way to incorporate a more discreet listening component into the summative are specifically in progress. We welcome the examiner's thoughts on the speaking component of the course. The course incorporates multiple opportunities for speaking in a variety of settings, but we will consider whether this should play a more prominent role in the summative assessment.

Question 19

As noted by the examiner, the assessments are weighted towards academic writing intentionally, as this will be a significant demand on all PhD candidates. However, if a specific listening component is introduced the weightings may be spread out slightly more

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:

Question 33

We would like to apologise if there has been miscommunication in relation to the Examiner's comment that he was not invited to the Progression Board meeting. Our understanding was that it had not been possible for him to attend. We had hoped that all External Examiners would attend, and had extended the invitation for them to visit for the longer period of two days in advance of the board this year. We will work to ensure that this does not happen again.

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

N/A