

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

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 23/07/2019

**Part A: General Information**

**Subject area and awards being examined**

*Title and Name of Examiner:*

*Faculty / School of:*

Institute for Transport Studies

*Subject(s):*

*Transport Studies*

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

TRAN1011 Challenges in Transport and Mobility  
TRAN1030 Introduction to Surface and Air Transport  
TRAN2010 Transport Economics  
TRAN2041 Transport, Energy and Environment  
TRAN2063 Key Challenges in Transport and Society  
TRAN3031 Public Transport Policy and Practice  
TRAN3070 Healthy Cities: Transport and Health  
TRAN1021 Transport Policy in Action  
TRAN1040 Global to Local: Challenges in Transport and Mobility  
TRAN2020 Transport Land Use and Development  
TRAN2030 Project Appraisal  
TRAN2062 Transport and Society  
TRAN2064 Exploring Transport and Society  
TRAN2070 Transport, Mobility and Safety  
TRAN3040 Physical Distribution and Logistics  
TRAN3052 Case Studies in Sustainable Transport  
TRAN3060 Travel Activity and Social Analysis

*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**

Detailed and informative feedback was provided for the majority of modules. Discussion of what was good, and what could have improved the mark further was presented in a clear way, helping students to develop their work. I particularly liked the signposting to additional support that was provided in some modules (I believe the Project Appraisal module is a good example). Processes were clear and easy to follow. Moderation forms were completed thoroughly, and with helpful comments where additional information was required.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

N/A

**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 (report) N (school response)
3.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Mentor?	N

**For Examiners completing their term of appointment only**

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	N/A
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	N/A
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	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*

N/A (first year)

**Standards**

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	N/A
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	N/A
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	N/A
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	N/A
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	N/A

*Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.*

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
-----	---	---

The links between teaching and research were clear to me, but were less clear to students, who told me that they recognised the importance of the work done in other departments (including Geography) but were less clear about the research ITS undertook, or the research interests & expertise of staff. I found this somewhat surprising, given the long-standing reputation of ITS.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
-----	--	---

*Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:*

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
-----	--	---

*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)?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

*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>I saw some really interesting and innovative assessments, requiring students to develop and demonstrate a range of communication skills &amp; techniques</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>Marking was fair and consistent, with attainment comparable to other institutions with which I am familiar.</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?	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?	N/A
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	N/A
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>The process was clear throughout.</p>		

#### Other comments

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

I had an interesting and informative meeting with students in March. They felt that staff were helpful and proactive in responding to issues. They liked the flexibility offered by the "Discovery" options and also valued the relatively small class sizes on most modules. They did feel that the way the discovery modules were run sometimes led to a lack of course coherence, with some material covered more than once, and some degree of variation in the quality of the material provided to students (particularly in respect of assessment rationale).

They suggested that better use could be made of alumni, both in facilitating work experience opportunities for students, and in contributing to taught material. They felt that running the placement year through the Geography department rather than ITS meant that placement information was not always relevant to them, and that close links with potential employers were not being developed. They wondered if this left them at a disadvantage compared to transport students at other institutions with more focused industry links.

I was surprised that they felt they had no input into course design, or into decisions about changes, and did not feel they had adequate opportunities to feed back on their experiences (this may have been a factor in their comments being more negative than positive – as our meeting represented an opportunity to "get things off their chest" that they could have aired in a staff student committee instead?). If opportunities do exist for them to be more involved in curriculum design, they need to be communicated better to students. If they do not exist, it may be desirable to consider introducing them.

That said, the students were engaged (& engaging) and were generally happy with their decision to study at Leeds, and with the experience they had had. They were welcoming and open, and I very much enjoyed talking to them.

I look forward to learning more about the modules and the institution during my term, and would like to thank the staff who have been supportive and patient as I find my way around.

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

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

*Transport Studies*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

TRAN1011 Challenges in Transport and Mobility  
 TRAN1030 Introduction to Surface and Air Transport  
 TRAN2010 Transport Economics  
 TRAN2041 Transport, Energy and Environment  
 TRAN2063 Key Challenges in Transport and Society  
 TRAN3031 Public Transport Policy and Practice  
 TRAN3070 Healthy Cities: Transport and Health  
 TRAN1021 Transport Policy in Action  
 TRAN1040 Global to Local: Challenges in Transport and Mobility  
 TRAN2020 Transport Land Use and Development  
 TRAN2030 Project Appraisal  
 TRAN2062 Transport and Society  
 TRAN2064 Exploring Transport and Society  
 TRAN2070 Transport, Mobility and Safety  
 TRAN3040 Physical Distribution and Logistics  
 TRAN3052 Case Studies in Sustainable Transport  
 TRAN3060 Travel Activity and Social Analysis

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

*Institute for Transport Studies*

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 [qat@leeds.ac.uk](mailto: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 for your positive feedback on our assessment practices. We are striving to provide students with constructive feedback enabling them to improve any future submissions.

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

N/A

**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:*

We have provided feedback on the previous external examiner's report during the June UG Assessment Board highlighting the improvements we have made through meetings to improve the consistency of our marking practices.

## 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 highlighting that students were struggling to see the links between ITS teaching and research. As mentioned by the external examiner, we have a long standing reputation in transportation research and aim to incorporate our research contributions in our teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. We will iterate this message to our teaching staff and stimulate them to be more informative on their personal research interest and expertise and where relevant include this in their teaching material.

## 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 your positive feedback.

## 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 your positive feedback, we aim to keep our processes as transparent, inclusive as possible.

## Other comments

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

We are pleased to read that our students valued the experience they had during their time at Leeds, particularly through the flexibility offered. A downside of the flexibility offered is that it is hard to ensure full coherency of the course and some degree of repetition may occur. However, in developing the programme, coherency is ensured and in most cases additional depth is provided when material is revisited later in the programme. The latter may not have been entirely clear to the students and could be better articulated during the lectures.

We assume that the lack of clarity in the assessment rationale was caused by accommodating different cohorts (20 credits and 10 credits) on specific modules (e.g. 1040 and 1011 and 1012) for whom the same assessment had different weightings in their overall mark. The larger 20 credit modules are now being phased out and this issue should accordingly be addressed.

ITS has an extensive alumni network and when opportunities arise to facilitate work experience these are communicated through the Geography department and hence the students should not be disadvantaged compared to other transport students. Moreover, the students are also invited to attend alumni presentation that ITS runs throughout the year.

The standard formal feedback channels, being student reps, student-staff forum and module feedback, are available to students to communicate their experiences and suggestions for curriculum design. As a university we have pledged to provide more mechanisms for mid-module feedback from students – including using informal means, and in the school of geography, where the BA Geography with Transport programme is parented, they are experimenting with an online anonymous discussion board for feedback and responses from staff – this is moderated by the DSEs and they are the ones who will respond.

