

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 02/07/2019

### Part A: General Information

#### Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Education

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

English, Language and Education  
TESOL

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

BA

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

#### Points of innovation and/or good practice

Good practice: Use of a range of assessments within Level 3 modules. In particular:

- **EDUC3000 Final Year Project includes a 10-minute oral presentation at the end of Term 1. This is good because it means that the whole mark is not dependent on one long essay, it helps the students to make concrete plans for this important piece of work at an early stage in the whole-year timeframe, and it adds oral communications skills and confidence to the areas that are developed by the work during the module.** In my consultation with students, the two finalists who attended commented that although they'd felt nervous about the oral presentation, they realised afterwards that it had really helped them to gain better understanding of what the scope and structure of a dissertation should be, so they were better prepared for the dissertation as a result of the presentation.
- EDUC 3009 Analysing Language Learning. The assessment comprises a portfolio and a media presentation. Within the portfolio, students include a reflective log which is kept during the process of taking a language class, annotation of that log, and an essay that analyses the log in the context of theory covered during the module. **This is a very rounded assessment** that develops a range of skills: different modes of communication, analytical skills, organisation skills. It goes far beyond a traditional essay format and offers the opportunity for students to stretch themselves and develop skills that will be genuinely useful in future employment. This year, I was able to see some of the media projects (though I encountered some technical problems too – see below), and was very impressed. The ones I saw testified to students' creatively engaging with the project and producing high quality work.

Other areas of good practice:

- **Marking appeared to be fair and transparent.** I saw clear evidence of moderation by 2<sup>nd</sup> markers with comments by the 2<sup>nd</sup> marker that enabled me to understand the process. In a module where double-blind marking was used, there was one instance where the markers had not agreed initially. The annotation in the mark sheet made it clear how they reached their eventual decision.
- Among the examples of assessed work that I saw, **the feedback to students was clear and detailed.** Use of headings made navigation of the comments clear, and indications of how the work could be further improved, were, in my view, easy for students to understand. Also, I found the use of the mark scale consistent overall. Importantly, for work that fell into the third class it was still clear how it merited a degree-level mark while nonetheless not being awarded a higher mark, while work at the other end of the scale was of a very high quality.

#### Enhancements made from the previous year

Adoption of the new University-wide full marking scale (so that the highest mark could now be 100 rather than the scale stopping at 90) is very welcome. (See further comments below.) Also, adoption of specified mark points

within each band (e.g., 62, 65 and 68 within the 2.1 class) is an improvement in my view. It solves the problem of the difficulty of differentiating between work awarded (for example) 64 and 65, and it sends a clear message to the student that the work is low, mid or high within the given class.

This year was the first year of the new BA TESOL programme, so I saw the marks for Level 1 modules on that programme. The programme replaces the BA English, Language and Education programme. In my view, this is a good, and needed, innovation, because there was some ambiguity as to what the content of the “English, Language and Education” programme should be. I raised queries about this last year in relation to the content of dissertations (on the EDUC3000 dissertation module). This year, during my opportunity to meet students, the Year 2 and Year 3 students immediately talked about how the content of the programme had not actually been what they expected. They had taken “English, Language” to be “English Language” (no comma) and had expected the content to be more like English Language A-level, so had been surprised by the focus on teaching English as a foreign/second language. Two of the four of them said they would not have applied to the programme if they had realised what the content would be. Given this feedback, moving to the BA TESOL (whose content is similar to, but not exactly the same as English, Language and Education) means the students should be fully aware of what they are signing up for. The one Level 1 student at the consultation confirmed that TESOL was exactly what wanted to do.

I was glad to be able to meet students on the same day as the exam board. This was not in place last year and, as I had not been able to attend the Spring 2018 meeting, I did not meet students at all in 2018-2019.

I was glad to be able to view media projects this year (see further comments below).

#### **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 an 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*

As indicated above, the phasing out of the English, Language and Education programme, to be replaced by BA TESOL, is welcome because BA TESOL is a clearer expression of what is actually offered. I understand from discussion during the exam board day that recruitment to the BA TESOL programme is difficult because A-level students do not know what TESOL is. I hope that the department can find ways to overcome this, because it should be an ideal programme for those undergraduates who are interested in the field and hope to teach English in the future.

## 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>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The comments here focus on the new BA TESOL.</p> <p>The programme builds from appropriate foundational modules through to advanced modules in which students can conduct their own research. I understand that it also provides opportunities for students to gain classroom experience through the Level 2 and Level 3 Students into Education modules (which were not offered on the English, Language and Education programme). Offering these modules at both Level 2 and Level 3 creates the potential for a valuable opportunity for development in the practical content of the module, in addition to developing academic skills and knowledge through the other modules (though, as this is Year 1 of this new programme, I have not yet seen the content of the Students into Education modules).</p> <p>In terms of comparability with similar programmes at other institutions, I am not very familiar with programmes of this nature. In fact, BA TESOL is a relatively rare BA-level programme. A quick glance at other BA programmes that also include TESOL suggests that the programme is comparable. <b>I note that some (e.g., Swansea) include the opportunity to take the CELTA professional qualification, which might be a welcome addition for students, if Leeds were able to add that in the future.</b></p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>Students clearly encounter research-led teaching and the opportunity to pursue their own research and incorporate insights from research into their work, particularly in Level 3. <b>I feel there is scope for a statement in handbooks and on the online recruitment pages about how the department's research ethos and/or content is built into the programmes.</b> All mentions of research in the handbooks (both TESOL and ELE) relate specifically to students' work on the modules, with no mention of the broader research context of the department.</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>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 think the programme design does this. I commented last year that it would be good to see the assessment sheets link the content of the assessment to the programme learning outcomes. I saw some evidence this year of assessment sheets Level 1 modules (e.g., EDUC 1015 Introduction to Study Education) explicitly linking the assessment to the module learning outcomes, which I believe helps to clarify to students why they need to do the particular assessment. <b>It would be good to see, across all levels, an indication of how the assessment links to the module learning outcomes AND the programme learning outcomes.</b></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>Academic standards appear similar to my own department (though the programme content is quite different). In most modules, the marks ranged from third to first class with a relatively normal distribution, with 2.i often being the median. There were very few fails but those that I saw were justifiable. The work that I saw in the first class range was of a very high quality: interesting content, well organised, written with flair and rigour.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Though the mark scale has been expanded to cover the full range up to 100, marks of 80 or higher were very rare in the modules assigned to me. <b>I think there is still some work to be done in getting all markers to use the full scale (while avoiding grade inflation at the same time).</b> In my pre-exam board comments, I highlighted cases on two modules where it seemed as if a mark in the 80s could have been awarded (EDUC 1052 Supporting English Language Teaching and Learning, EDUC3030 Language Learning Technology and Materials). In EDUC1052, one assessed component was described (on the marksheet – I did not see the comments to the student) as “excellent” and a “model portfolio” but it was awarded 72, which seems low in relation to the comments. In EDUC3030, I queried whether the high quality work that got the highest mark (78) could reasonably have been awarded 85.</li> <li>• <b>A point raised in the student consultation about assessed media projects was that some of the cohort had experienced difficulties with the actual submission.</b> Apparently they had felt unprepared for submission by means of a tool that had not used before and the process had been stressful. I wonder if next year training could be given, possibly in the form of a series of screenshots that illustrate the process of submitting via the specified platform. Or, perhaps a practice submission point could be offered a couple of weeks before the real submission is due, where students can “submit” a dummy file, so they know what to expect.</li> </ul>		

### 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
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y
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>None</p>		

#### Other comments

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

1. Although I've noted some critical comments from the students I met, above, they also praised some aspects of their experience. In particular, they praised the level of support and enthusiasm from many individual staff members within the School of Education. One finalist commented that it was this support from staff within the department that made degree a good experience for
2. I have also experienced excellent support from my main point of contact: the School's admin staff.
3. I was very glad to no longer be required to physically sign marksheets and then scan them and send them back.
4. I encountered some technical difficulties. I was not able to view all of the media projects assigned to me, getting an "unauthorized" error message for some. Also, at both points when I needed to access my Minerva account (for Semester 1 and Semester 2 marking oversight), my access had lapsed, apparently because of my inactivity on Minerva. External Examiners are likely to only access Minerva twice a year, though, so can the period after which an account lapses be lengthened for externals? Juggling external examination work with the demands of my own department means I've got very restricted windows in which to do the work, and if I miss the window due to technical difficulties, it's problematic. In addition, in June, it suddenly became a condition of reinstating my account that I had to do the Leeds online data protection training module. This was infuriating and unnecessary, as I have done training modules with the same content at . This just wasted the time I could spend on fulfilling the real content of the external examination.

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

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

*Education*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

English, Language and Education  
TESOL

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

BA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Co-programme leader

Faculty / School of:

*Education*

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**

We will keep up the good practice and pass on the positive comments to tutors and the teaching team.

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

We will keep up the good practice and pass on the positive comments to tutors and the teaching team.

**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:

No matters are raised.

**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:

The external examiner and I had a meeting after met with the students regarding the replacement of ELE with TESOL and issues with the acronym TESOL. We will enlist it as an issue to be discussed in our next programme meeting.

**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:

- The Centre of English Studies at Leeds provides training in CELTA. We'll make sure the information are passed onto students.
- We'll add a paragraph about research-informed programme design and teaching in the handbooks for Level 1-3 2019-2020.

## 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 will send a reminder to all module leaders/tutors to make sure the programme and module learning outcomes are included in the assignment briefs and explained how the assessment tasks are respondent to each outcome.
- Discussions about using the full scale of grades are going on and will be further discussed in the next programme meeting.
- The message of providing guidance/training in submitting media projects will be passed onto the module tutors.

## 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:*

No comments were made in this section.

## Other comments

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

I will pass on the message about prolonging the length of inactivity in Minerva to

The comments about unnecessary training modules should be dealt with by the university administrative team responsible for external examiners.