

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 06/11/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Sociology and Social Policy

Subject(s):

Gender Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MSc in Gender Studies

1. **Que(e)rying Sexualities** SLSP5304M
2. **Theorising Gender 1** SLSP5312M
3. **Theorising Gender 2** SLSP5313M
4. **Contested Bodies—**SLSP5302M
5. **Dissertations** SLSP5400M

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

MSc

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.

I wish to commend the examiners on the exemplary quality of feedback on student work. It's really heartening to see the level of effort that has gone into marking student work on the degree. In particular, I am very impressed by the podcast assessment on Theorising Gender2. I've carefully gone over the paperwork/assessment FAQs for the exercise and I find it such an exciting and creative form of assessment.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Through each of my three years as external examiner on the programme, I have encouraged faculty to develop a much more transnational curriculum. And, I am pleased to report that the curriculum is indeed now much more transnational and reflexive on questions of racialised identities and enduring forms of coloniality. However, as these interventions/ projects are never complete and are always only ever in progress/a process, I would continue to encourage towards transnationalising the curriculum even further.

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

No

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For Examiners in the first year of appointment only

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| 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? | N |
| 3. | Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor? | Y /N This is NA in my case. In fact, I would like to raise an objection to this practice, which I find patronising and undermining, especially to women scholars and scholars of colour. I hope the University will remove this clause/requirement. |

For Examiners completing their term of appointment only

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|----|---|---|
| 4. | Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment? | Y |
| 5. | Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made? | Y |
| 6. | Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this? | Y |
| 7. | Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor? | N And, I don't plan to either for the reasons I outline above. |

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

| | | |
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| 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 |
| <i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i> | | |

| | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 13. | Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear? | Y |
| <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> | | |
| 14. | Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD? | Y / N |
| <i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i> I am unable to comment on this. | | |
| 15. | Does the programme include clinical practice components? | N |
| <i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i> | | |
| 16. | Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)? | N |
| <i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i> | | |

Assessment and Feedback

| | | |
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| 17. | Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment? | Y |
| <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> | | |
| 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>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> | | |
| <i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i> | | |

The Progression and Awards Process

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| 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 |

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| 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? | N |
| 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? | N |
| 34. | Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board? | Y / N NA |
| 35. | Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board? | Y / N NA |
| Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above: | | |

Other comments

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

It gives me great pleasure to submit my external examiner's report. I would like to thank for sending all the examination materials to me in an efficient and flawless manner.

As external examiner for MSc in Gender Studies, I have examined the following courses:

1. **Que(e)rying Sexualities** SLSP5304M
2. **Theorising Gender 1** SLSP5312M
3. **Theorising Gender 2** SLSP5313M
4. **Contested Bodies**—SLSP5302M
5. **Dissertations** SLSP5400M

I agree with all the marks awarded. I wish to commend the examiners on the very high quality of feedback on the work. It's really heartening to see the level of effort that has gone into marking student work on the degree.

Overall, I found the work produced by the students of a very high standard and the curriculum appropriate for the level of study. In particular, I very much enjoyed reading the dissertations, which were creative, intellectually rigorous, and thoughtful. In my view, some of these can be encouraged to be reworked for publication either in the form of blogposts or as articles. In particular, I was struck by the fluency and insightfulness of two of these:

- * "Letting loose but it's Leeds Cold: Understanding the Political Functions of Leeds' Queer Party Scene", and
- * "Female Consciousness in Chinese TV Series My Youthfulness"

I have looked at all the curriculum materials and the reading lists on the course. I find them appropriate and relevant for enabling students to think critically. I found the summative assessments interesting and representing appropriate levels of challenge. In particular, I am very impressed by the podcast assessment on Theorising Gender2. I've carefully gone over the paperwork/assessment FAQs for the exercise and I find it such an exciting and creative form of assessment. I am very keen to find out if the faculty thought that this different mode had enabled them to assess students more effectively and if they planned to continue with this? I also note that the students did particularly well in the podcast assignment and that it also helped them improve their overall grade on the course. To my mind, this is clearly an evidence of learning intersubjectively but also the significance of having different modes of assessments, as they clearly enable students to do better, whilst also learning different skills in the process.

Finally, in each of my three years as external examiner on the programme, I have encouraged faculty to develop a much more transnational curriculum. And, I am pleased to report that the curriculum is indeed now much more transnational and reflexive on questions of racialised identities and enduring forms of coloniality. However, as these interventions/ projects are never complete and are always only ever in progress/a process, I would continue to encourage towards transnationalising the curriculum even further.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Que(e)rying Sexualities SLSP5304M, Theorising Gender 1 SLSP5312M, Theorising Gender 2 SLSP5313M, Contested Bodies SLSP5302M, Dissertations SLSP5400M

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Gender Studies

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

Sociology & Social Policy

Address for communication:

University of Leeds
LS2 9JT

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

Thank you for recognising the innovative work colleagues have pursued in the podcast assessment and the quality of their feedback for this. I am particular pleased with the way this assessment encourages peer-to-peer learning and would be interested in exploring this form of assessment on other modules.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Thank your encouragement year on year to further internationalise our curriculum, I am pleased that you will recognise changes that we have made. We agree with your assessment that such work can never truly be complete and continue to work on this as a school.

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

Other comments

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

Thank you for such a detailed review of these modules, your careful comments will be shared with all members of the gender studies teaching team. We have encouraged a number of students to submit their dissertations to our northern notes blog so there excellent work can be read by a broader public.