

## School of Art, Architecture and Design

### Postgraduate

- MAAAD Art and Design(TP)

Please indicate, below, whether you agree with the statements about the threshold standards of Leeds Beckett University's awards, student achievement and the conduct of the University's assessment processes, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements. Please also list any shortcomings and areas for commendation. You should expand on any issues you mention here in the main report. If any boxes are ticked "No" the Dean of School or nominee will be alerted and will oversee the response from the Course Director.

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#### Standards Set

	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/awards meet with the requirements of the relevant National Qualifications Statement's."	X	

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

#### Student achievement

	Yes	No	N/A*
"In my view, students' who have been awarded qualifications have had the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar." *Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this statement, please note here:	X		

Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

#### Conduct of process

Yes No

# External Examiner's report summary

"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are reliable, rigorous and fairly conducted."

**X**

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

## Actions from last year's report

(This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time)

No

## Areas of good practice/commendation

Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment:

The course is well taught with a focus on underpinning practice with theory which I think gives it its unique character.

## Main report

In this section you are asked to describe more fully how the University has or has not maintained threshold academic standards and the quality of the student experience in relation to the course(s) for which you are the external examiner, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements.

**Please complete all sections of the form fully and where not applicable please state N/A. Where applicable please also complete the sections for any collaborative provision sampled.**

If you are an external examiner for any of the University's Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes (HND/HNC level) provision, please also complete the section on page 9 sections l, m and n entitled "for External Examiners Associated with Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes."

## Professional Body Requirements

	Yes	No	N/A*
"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met. *Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.	<b>X</b>		

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).

This was so hugely impacted by the Covid 19 situation that it would not be very useful to comment in detail. I would say that I found the sample could have been sent to me more in advance as it makes for a

rather rushed experience.

(b) The action, if any was required, taken in response to your report of last year. (This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time.)

Again because of Covid 19 it's hard to say. My main observation was that students really suffered from the lack of space until the summer. The experience of exhibiting and having space to make work is so central to practice that they seem to be bumped about the 'real estate' in haphazard way rather than having a good base. It important for the staff and students to find a way to make this happen and I'm sure the quality fo the work will take a jump if this were to happen. My other observation was that workloads for fractional staff, particularly for the programme leader seems quite extreme. Obviously both point here have financial implications but I do think it's worth looking at.

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.

Clearly the completion of the MAAD modules has suffered a great deal from the Covid-19 situation. The focus towards an exhibition as the ultimate goal, and the track record of the course using exhibition as a conceptual underpinning, must have been hard to relinquish for both staff and students.

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.

Looking at the sample in comparison to the interim work I can see that the 'distance travelled' for the students has been compromised. Aside from not being able to see a show, I do feel that the online exhibition is a bit patchy as it only seems to suit the working methodology of a small number of students. At the lower end of your sample I would question the suitability of a pass mark under normal circumstances, but I'm led to believe some form of inbuilt mitigation has been applied in marking. With all these things considered I'm happy with the sample

(e) The standards of the structure, organisation, design and marking of all examination papers and/or other forms of assessment.

Any course where making artefacts is the vehicle for conceptual thinking means that it is hard to mark the alternative outcomes in the same way. Even to be bound up with the granularity of percentages when pass/fail seems to be the only reasonable judgement one could make seems slightly superfluous. Having had experience of the same set of circumstances I appreciate that this was hard of the staff team too, meetings on Teams or Zoom seem to be both time consuming and unsatisfactory all at once.

(f) The curriculum, teaching or resourcing of the programme of study as indicated by the performance of the students in the assessment

# External Examiner's report summary

For the future I would strongly suggest that the mitigation, specifically for the pandemic, is formalised. If there is a blanket 'no detriment' policy that all students are aware of, combined with a more basic pass/fail without percentages, this may help the staff team also.

(g) Comments on the use of My Beckett (Virtual Learning Environment) within the course (if applicable).

N/A

(h) Module content, consistency of modules and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes. (You may be asked by your School to provide detailed comments on the modules that you examine.)

The module content is good. The course was renamed and some modifications made to modules since the start of my tenure and these all seem very sensible and evidence led.

(i) Areas of student/staff engagement in teaching and learning, scholarship, research or professional practice.

There were no opportunities to exhibit work this year but in previous years the exhibition led projects brought out the best in staff and students. I'd like to think that this type of activity can still be supported and encouraged.

(j) The University welcomes external examiners' comments on its academic regulatory framework. Such comments may not have a direct bearing on standards set and achieved or the conduct of processes and so it may not be appropriate to include them elsewhere in this report or its summary. Please record any concerns or comments you may have here.

See above with regard to slightly haphazard mitigation. I think also that it is well worth considering my previous observation from the last report "I do find that the marking system a little unnecessarily complex for a masters course, pass, merit or distinction is a model that could be looked at (perhaps dropping 'merit' and reserving 'distinction' for students who really excel)." to dispense with unnecessary 'granularity' in the marking scheme for a Masters course.

(k) Collaborative Provision: please include here any comments you wish to make on elements of collaborative provision for which you have responsibility (in addition to those you may have indicated previously in this report).

N/A

