

School of Film, Music and Performing Arts

Undergraduate

- BAFLM Filmmaking(UG)

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

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"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)

N/A

Areas of good practice/commendation

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

- There was good evidence of a balance between supporting creative thinking and developing craft skills in the teaching methods, further evidenced through the quality of the work
- Assessment Feedback was consistent, supportive and clear, giving students a sense of achievement but also strong areas for future development. This was particularly evident in the Dissertation Proposal feedback which was in depth and clearly supported students moving into Level 6.
- The CL makes very good use of screen recording/ audio feedback in Editing classes, giving a really detailed sense of performance but also supporting a wide range of learners. This is worth considering applying to other specialisms - particularly those with a visual dimension (production design, cinematography)

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

"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.

Yes

No

N/A*

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).

I attended Progression Boards during my mid year visit and was pleased to find a well operated and high functioning board, making clear and supportive decisions about each student. In the summer clear and appropriate measures were put in place to continue the work of the boards in light of the Covid19 lockdown. These measures ensured smooth, consistent and fair operation of the boards.

(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.)

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

Across the Level 5 modules I external examined during my two visits it was good to see the course team using the complete spread of marks. The overall performance in each module and across the level I examined showed evidence that students were able to meet a range of levels of performance across an appropriate array of subject areas . The quality of the student outcomes was comparable to standards in other HEIs and consistent with national benchmarks.

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

The work I examined at various levels of attainment, across a range of modules at the upper levels evidenced strong craft skills, strong creative thinking and application of ideas, concepts and knowledge. The lower performing students, as is typical at other HEIs, did not sufficiently evidence their learning, knowledge and skills. As is typical of Filmmaking courses, it was very clear to see how engagement with aspects of study - in particular focusing on making rather than research tasks (theory v practice) and lack of engagement with the collaborative aspects of film practice has led to poorer performance for some students.

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

Assessment methods and requirements were across the board appropriate to the modules I examined. There is clarity for students in what is required of them for each module, and the assessment processes are clear and transparent. The marking is robust and in line with both other HEIs I am familiar with and has been carried out precisely within the University frameworks. As is usual with Filmmaking degree courses there is a real challenge in ensuring parity across the assessment, delivery and design. of multiple specialisms - but this appears to have been carried out effectively by the course team.

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

The Level 5 curriculum is appropriately varied and well resourced to support a range of learners across a very wide variety of specialist craft areas, themes and creative spaces. There is an appropriate blend of skills development and creative/reflective thinking as well as a good blend of theory and practice. It is encouraging to see connectivity between levels of study with some excellent work done to support students moving towards level 6 and further to post-graduation. It is clear that students are acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to function as professionals in the industry as well as prepare for further study. Measures put in place to mitigate against Covid19 lockdown have been sufficient to ensure students still have high quality teaching and are able to perform at assessment, evidencing appropriate levels of skill, knowledge and reflection.

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

My Beckett has been effectively used across the range of modules I have examined.

(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.)

Overall there is consistency of modules, module content and assessment across the course. Students are effectively supported to achieve against each of the learning outcomes. More detailed comments about each module I have examined across my two visits are found below.

Level 5 - Film Art

I found the assessment process to be rigorous and fair given and the documentation clear and precise for students to follow and understand expectations. The work was compatible with national standards in courses I am familiar with and the marking consistent with the appropriate level and qaa subject benchmark.

Perhaps one might look again at the marking criteria to ensure that these are objective and it is clear for a student how their work might meet different levels of performance. Similarly with such large numbers of students to assess requiring several staff to mark, it would be beneficial to students to ensure a common consistent language used in written feedback. This is not to say the marking is not accurate, it is – but the feedback may be confusing for a student understanding how it relates to their performance in places.

Level 5 - Filmmaking

Very detailed and extensive feedback, both on each group film, and on the role each student undertook – this is accurate and largely linked to the learning outcomes/ levels of performance. In places the language and some statements made in the Critical Reflection feedback is more personal than perhaps it might be, and is less clearly linked to the LOs. The feedback throughout is student focused.

The feedback is notable for encouraging students to work on their strengths and areas for development.

The marks are accurate and consistent with national standards. There is a good range of marks, across the various specialisms and grade levels.

One Language is particularly impressive and mature Level 5 production, with an impressive craft skills in a range of the other films.

Level 5 - SW3

There is deviation in the manner in which feedback is presented for the specialism, although in places this is reflective of the specialism, perhaps there is a lack of parity with the detail and length of feedback provided across specialisms.

Feedback is excellent for editing – the use of screen recording/ VO gives in-depth breakdown of the strengths and weakness of each submission in relation to the submission requirements. Similarly - direction specialism feedback is detailed and in-depth – and one wonders how the staff find the time to write/ record feedback.

It's clear that assessment is robust and carried out to internal guidance. Perhaps there is strong good practice that might be applied across different modules. For example the screen recorded / VO approach supports all learners and may work well for other specialisms such as direction, cinematography and production design. The PDF feedback for production design is clear in how it focuses the student's performance according to the LOs.

Level 5 - Experimental Film

The module was clearly impacted by the Covid19 pandemic but it is encouraging to see students performing to such a standard. The team clearly put in place measures to ensure students were able to perform (I couldn't locate the essays) and ensured that aspects of the experience of the unit were able to continue through the module (e.g. the online screenings instead of the Symposium) The marks appear to be accurate, and the feedback backs up the marking where examples have been provided.

Level 5 - Film Research

The sample suggests a robust, accurate and student centred/supportive assessment process. The feedback is detailed and to the point, offering students the opportunity to reflect upon how their dissertations need to progress moving forwards offering some solid suggestions for next steps in each case. There is clear that the same constructive critique is applied to submissions at all levels. The marking is accurate and within national benchmark standards. At the same time, there is clear evidence of the diagnostic nature of this assessment in the feedback.

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

Upon my first visit, I met with a small group of level 5 and 6 students who were a credit to the course. They praised the teaching of specialism and practice based modules as well as the clear examples of how / when their feedback has been listened to and acted on by the course team and university . They did raise

External Examiner's report summary

some issues with timetables , marking and the balance of theory to practice which I would suggest were typical concerns of students nationally in the subject area.

None the less improvements put in place to address these issues would doubtlessly enhance the student experience and improve NSS scores in relevant areas.

(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.

NA

(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).

NA