

School of Film, Music and Performing Arts

Undergraduate

- BAUEN Audio Engineering(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

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)

Yes

Areas of good practice/commendation

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

Of all the teaching material looked at, I can confirm that it was well written and documented. The module handbooks are especially well written and provide all the necessary information for students in advance of undertaking the coursework. It should be noted that entire course works well together and gives the students a very employable set of skills across a broad range of disciplines which I feel is essential for any graduate working in this industry. It appears that the Programme Team are very good at looking at how industry changes and keeping abreast of the latest technologies and practices. This further supported by the excellent staff who are able to provide students with a very positive experience at this establishment.

I can also confirm that the quality of the student work looked at was comparable with other institutions.

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*

X

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).

Due to COVID-19, I was not required to attend the virtual board on the 21st July 2020. That said, I was satisfied with information provided pre and post board from both the course admin team and course director. All decisions made were based on professional academic judgement for the good of each student presented. Similar to last year, I like the module reports within MyBeckett provided by Module Leaders that outlined the overall themes of the module, an overview of the coursework, and the general student performance.

(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.

Overall, the academic performance of the students is comparable of that with other institutions and I see no real difference in the marks presented. There does seem to be a slight roll-off in terms of engagement especially in the second semester but this is behaviour that is echoed in other institutions especially during the pandemic. There also appears to be an unusually higher number of non-submissions across the modules although this isn't too surprising given the difficult circumstances as students adapted to working from home. I'm sure that the teaching staff will actively try to address this problem with continued support over the summer months before the start of the next academic year to assist those students who may have struggled during this period.

It is evident from the module reports that on the whole, there was no real 'COVID-effect' on the performance of the modules when comparing student performance on previous years. In fact, some modules saw an increase in the overall performance (this is something which is echoed at Glasgow Caledonian University). The alternative assessments provided to students in light of COVID-19 have ensured that the learning outcomes of the affected modules are not altered to the detriment of the student experience and transfer of knowledge.

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

Generally, students seem to do better at practical-based coursework over written or test/exam situations which is normal given the subject area. This performance is generally reflected at my own institution so is not unique to this course. The coursework throughout the programme has been written in such a way that students are able to demonstrate the theory of the subjects within the degree, usually to a very high standard – skills that are likely to be transferable to the real world. I have no concerns in this area.

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

As last year, the quality and detail provided within feedback mechanisms (where appropriate) is very good and should be commended. Hopefully students will actually absorb the feedback provided and act appropriately. That said, I feel that the use of Rubrics varies across modules i.e. some coursework feedback will issue some general feedback whereas others will provide a breakdown of marks in each criteria of the marking guide(s) and provide general comments at the end. Some excellent examples of feedback, especially in degree projects. Great direction for students to be able to follow, and to understand where they gained and lost marks. There is further evidence that the feedback mechanisms used by staff has become more unified from last year especially since moving to an online model of course delivery.

In addition to the above, it was good to see that many of the modules affected by COVID offered options within their alternative assessments so that there was no detriment to those who could complete the original brief (where appropriate). Where a second option was offered, it was clear that the LOs of the module could still be met in light of the situation.

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

From what I have observed on MyBeckett, there are no issues with the quality of the teaching, resources, or curriculum for this course. It appears that the Programme Team are very good at looking at how industry changes and keeping abreast of the latest technologies and practices – something that is essential within industry and communicated to students. This has been a challenging year for academia and the overall student performance is reflected in that challenge. It will be especially important to develop good methods for online delivery, or socially distanced delivery as applicable especially in practical, hands-on modules.

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

The module material presented to students is often well organised and structured appropriately for intuitive navigation. The layout of content is broadly similar across all modules although does vary slightly between module leaders. There are some good examples of blended learning on some modules i.e. videos, audio clips etc. I particularly like the consistent links across all modules to training on plagiarism, referencing etc. – this allows students to access these resources with ease. This sentiment was echoed in last year's report and I continue to have no concerns in this area.

(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, the presentation of the EE materials on MyBeckett was well organised and structured appropriately for intuitive navigation. The course team continue to deliver relevant and high-quality content for dissemination to students.

Level 6:

- Audio Engineering Project

- o Good spread of marks presented (albeit from a very small cohort) and seem fair across the board. The broad range of projects is good and a couple of excellent projects have been provided for view.
- o Although some projects had to be altered due to COVID, it appears that across the board, there has been little detriment to the students overall due to the slightly elevated performance of this cohort.
- o Feedback is detailed and rigorous with appropriate use of the marking guide. This is helpful in continuing to develop the students further beyond the scope of the module.

- Applied Acoustics

- o Seems like quite a challenging module (but essential for this programme) with an expected spread of marks at this level.
- o Broad range of student work is presented with some excellent examples.
- o Appears that the students were not heavily impacted by COVID for this module as much of the work had been carried out and could be completed. As such LOs were not impacted.

- Sound Reproduction Systems

- o The overall marking and feedback is clear and fair throughout this module.
- o Some good examples of student work is provided throughout.
- o I like that fieldwork is appreciated by the students and is part of the module delivery. It will be challenging this year to find an alternative solution.

- Game Audio

- o Good that options were provided as part of the alternative assessment given the CPU load that Unreal often brings. Shows flexibility and understanding given the circumstances to each student's need.

- Audio Visual Interfaces

- o Really interesting module with some very good projects.
- o The link to the student work via Vimeo was especially useful in getting a feel for the standard and broad range of student work.
- o Good to see that growth areas are covered as part of this module i.e. machine learning, IoT etc. This is something we are trying to integrate more of within our own syllabus.

- Spatial Audio

- o Some really excellent learning resources within the content area for self-directed study.
- o Of the student work observed, there is evidence of some interesting examples applying spatial audio techniques.
- o Would be good to see further integration using marking rubrics as part of the feedback mechanisms but feedback provided here is detailed.

Level 5:

- Acoustics and Psychoacoustics

- o A broad range of subjects taught in this module and supporting materials very good.
- o Nice to see a broad range of students within this module given the complex nature of the materials delivered.
- o Appropriate alternative assessment provided in light of COVID.

- Audio System Design

- o Excellent and detailed feedback has been provided for the report with a breakdown of the marks within each element of the coursework.
- o Some good marks here with some students excelling in the subject area.
- o Positive comments from students about the value of the module and teaching staff.

- Digital Signal Processing

- o Again, some excellent and detailed feedback has been provided for the report with a breakdown of the marks within each element of the coursework.
- o Good range of teaching material available within the VLE.

- Level 5 Project

- o Wide range of projects to choose from which are all extremely relevant within the industry. The module provides a good opportunity for students to specialise in a certain area of interest and the transferable skills obtained on the module are appropriate for progression to level 6.
- o Overall a good spread of marks across the cohort.
- o Excellent and detailed feedback has been provided for the report with a breakdown of the marks within each element of the coursework.
- o Some good student work is evident here.

- Audio Transducer Design

- o Well-organised teaching materials online. I like that there are set tasks/homework available at the end of each week to help solidify the understanding of concepts. This was something mentioned last year so it is good that this practice has continued.
- o Good spread of marks and feedback is very detailed throughout.

- Live Sound

- o Good alternative assessment is provided in light of COVID. Welcome to see that students were able to choose appropriate assessment based on experience / knowledge.
- o Appropriate spread of marks and student work is of good quality. The marking is rigorous but as stated before.

Level 4:

- Audio Engineering Skills

- o Module content is well organised for access by the students.
- o Feedback to students is good throughout.
- o Some really interesting portfolios being presented here – the concepts covered offer a good foundation for future modules undertaken.

- Audio Electronics

- o Similar to last year's comment, I feel that the module content could be organised a little clearer so that students can easily find the information that they require. Compared to some other modules, this aspect could be improved but otherwise fine.
- o Again, there is a good spread of marks across this module.

- Creative Audio Technologies

- o Similar to the past two academic sessions, there is a fairly high rate of NS for this particular module. It should be recommended that the module team look at the factors which are affecting these students. That said, there is some good work in here by the better performing students.
- o Very interesting module allowing students to start programming creatively. The coursework is particularly well executed.

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

From what is available on MyBeckett, it is evident that much support is provided to students in terms of supplementary directed reading on topics covered in the lectures/practical labs etc. The staff continue to be dedicated in expanding their research and scholarly activities for the good of the student experience and the programme.

(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.

As recommended last year, pass thresholds for individual coursework elements should be considered (presumably this is a university-wide policy). As it stands, students can still fail one element of the module but still pass overall although that student may not have achieved a learning outcome, which arguably might be required for future modules. At GCU minimum pass thresholds have been rolled out in Years 1 and 2 for and will be extended for Years 3 and 4 this academic session.

(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