

## School of Film, Music and Performing Arts

### Undergraduate

- BHMSP Music Production(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:

The feedback and supportive comments provided to students on assessed work continues to be both thorough and encouraging and comments provide scope for students future learning and development. Audio feedback is widely used in practical assessments enabling tutors to highlight specific areas of work very clearly. The Music for Film and TV module this year made use of video feedback for the first time. Given the visual aspect of work produced in this module this was excellent practice enabling much clearer and more focused feedback to be delivered.

The programme continues to be very industry aware with assessments in many of the modules at levels 5 and 6 providing effective simulations of real-world working experiences. There is an effective balance between theory and practice on the course and learners develop sound skills and theoretical knowledge as they progress through the programme.

## 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.			
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).

The end of year board was held as a series of staged meetings this year due to the pandemic. I was kept well informed and provided with very clear documentation to review and comment on prior to the final stage of the awards and progression board. I am satisfied that all student profiles were given due consideration and that the board process was very thorough.

(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.

Work produced on the programme and the performance of students is comparable to that of other institutions I am familiar with. The range of grades awarded are a fair representation of the student engagement with the assessments and marking criteria were applied effectively.

As with previous years there continue to be some excellent examples of industry focused practical work at levels 5 and 6. Options within the programme provide students with a good range of choices and grades awarded reflect the specialist and individual focus of the modules and fairly represent the effort and technical attainment demonstrated by students.

I would however encourage staff to explore the full range of grades in respect of some of the higher quality work. Some modules can demonstrate a little bunching in the 2:1 grade boundary with few grades reaching towards the higher end of the 1st grade category.

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

As stated in previous reports, students on the programme demonstrate very good technical production knowledge and are able to make informed choices and apply skills effectively. The development of technical knowledge and practical skills builds well between the levels on the programme with the majority of learners demonstrating an accomplished level of technical ability at level 6.

Standards of academic writing and conceptual understanding in all modules I viewed are good and academic standards are well enforced within assessments and feedback.

The range of grades attained indicates that assessments are appropriate although, as mentioned in my comment in (c) above, staff could be encouraged to explore the full range of marks in respect of some of the higher quality examples of work.

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

Assessment information and processes are very clearly outlined in the module handbooks which contain detailed briefs and grading criteria. Module handbooks adhere to a standardised format presenting information in a consistent and well organised way across all modules. Appropriate standards are used in the assessment criteria and are comparable with other UK HEI's that I am familiar.

The marking was fair and consistent across all modules that I examined with clear evidence of effective moderation processes across that teaching team.

In a number of modules (Music for Film and TV, Mixing Practice and Field Recording) there is interim tutor feedback or simulated 'client' feedback formalised into the assessment process. This practice is working well and from what I observed it is clear to see where students have acted on this and the results are evident in the quality of the final work.

Due to the pandemic, alternative assessments were offered to students in semester 2 with the option to continue with the original brief if they could access the required equipment. These changes were implemented very swiftly and communicated clearly, and I commend the teaching team for their approach here.

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

Overall student performance indicates that the curriculum, teaching and resourcing are working well. There appeared to be a relatively high proportion of mitigation and non-submissions in some modules, although this is to be expected given the lockdown and move to online delivery and assessment and is consistent with my experience at other HEI's.

In Songwriting & Production, the module leader report noted that "Students still struggle with the written analysis and it brings everyone's overall mark down. We are looking into the option of asking students to write a song in response to their songwriter research which feels more appropriate for the module. Including a short-written overview of how the song responds to the research." – this is an excellent idea and more appropriate in helping to develop considered songwriting practice within the module. I would encourage this to be implemented as it will hopefully enable some students to achieve a higher overall grade in this module as well as giving students wider practical experience.

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

As stated in my previous reports, MyBeckett is used very effectively to provide learning materials and to submit and assess work. Organisation and content of the VLE across all modules viewed was consistent and easy to navigate. The use of module boxes to collate samples of work and feedback was very well organised in all modules and made the process of examining very straightforward. Complements once again to the team for the clear and timely organisation of materials.

(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.)

Modules cover a wide range of music production skills and disciplines and the content is well informed by current industry practice. It is clear how the aims and outcomes of the modules link to the overall course learning outcomes.

The consistency of information and materials, and the design of module assessment briefs was consistent and appropriate across all levels and modules viewed. Assessment standards and the amount of assessed work are appropriate to the credit weightings and the level of study. Feedback provided was detailed and constructive with rubrics being used to indicate where grades had been awarded in respect of learning outcomes. It is clear from feedback on the assessed work that staff have a very good relationship with students and appear enthusiastic and supportive of the work produced.

Greater use of researched presentations in some modules in place of written work is welcome. This helps to develop a wider range of skills within the cohort whilst remaining academically rigorous.

The tutoring and project supervision process in the Music Production Project module continues to work well. As ever there was a wide range of interesting projects and dissertations completed and despite many plans needing to change after lockdown there was still some creative and interesting work produced.

Covid-19 had a greater impact on modules requiring the use of more specialist equipment, Field Recording and Mastering in particular, in relation to the ability for students to complete work in its original form. The adjustments made and alternative assessments set were appropriate, and students were able to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

Overall, I am satisfied with module content, the consistency of modules on the programme and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes.

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

Staff engagement in professional practice, research and scholarly activity evidently informs the module content and quality of the teaching provision positively.

The programme also has some well-established industry links which are a great resource for students and staff in maintaining currency with industry practice. Resources need to continue to be made available to support and develop these links.

(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.

I have no concerns relating to the academic regulatory framework.

The changes necessitated by the pandemic with regard to how credits were counted towards progression and final awards were fair and similar to approaches taken by other institutions.

(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