

Leeds School Of Social Sciences

Postgraduate

- MAHRP Intrntnl Human Rights Practice(TP)
- MAIPE Inter Polit Econ (12MFT/24MPT)(TP)
- MAITR International Relations(TP)
- MAPAX Peace and Development(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
"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 modules were well-conceived, topical and built upon a wide range of research expertise within the department. Student engagement with module teaching, for the most part, appears solid. PG modules were well put together, with good use made of the VLE and a good standard of course documentation. There were some specific innovative areas of teaching I liked on the following modules:

- Use of Wikis in L7 group project (Theorising Human Rights)
- Good use of VLE for L7 distance learning module (Theorising Human Rights)

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).

Due to Covid and the birth of my new baby, I was unable to attend the PAB this year. However, I received an invitation and all information necessary to allow to complete my report and oversight duties. I have confidence that the PAB and associated processes have been conducted properly.

(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.

This was a problematic area and I felt the performance of significant sections of the cohort was below other HE institutions. From the modules I surveyed, there were significant problems with very high failure rates. This is a serious issue, as ongoing high failure rates are likely to negatively affect course metrics, student feedback and perceptions of the masters programme. My sense was that these poor performances were not as a result of poor teaching and assessment practice on individual modules, as the modules in question appeared well organised and with an appropriate teaching and learning approach. Some reflection on admissions standards may be merited here, as these were not first year students but postgraduates who have already completed a degree. Are the students accepted onto MA programmes equipped with the skills necessary to complete the programme? If admissions standards are deemed appropriate, these poor performances merit subsequent consideration of whether a more rigorous approach to generic academic skills development needs to be embedded within the masters programme.

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

There were significant weaknesses in student performance across the PG modules I examined. The problems seemed to centre on very poor academic skills of some of the students. These were revealed in incidences of plagiarism and more general poor handling of sources. These led to assessment failure or weak performances.

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

Organization and design of assessment was of a high standard across the modules examined. I particularly liked the creation of opportunities for reflection in some of the assessments. Feedback and marking was of a generally good standard.

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

The curriculum and teaching appeared of a high standard, with a varied and stimulating content. I felt the poor student performances were related to a weak cohort, rather than specific deficiencies in the curriculum or assessments of the modules I examined.

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

There was good use made of the VLE. As in 2019, the use of the VLE for the distance learning module (Theorising Human Rights) was particularly commendable.

(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.)

Please see detailed comments in my preliminary report. There was overall consistency in the marking, assessment and content. However, there was a problematic area in relation to plagiarism on 'Critical Perspectives on Peace and War'.

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

N/A

(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.

N/A

(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

