

BAH English and History

External Examiner's report summary

Please indicate in the relevant boxes 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.

Standards set		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/awards are appropriate."	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' achievement is comparable with similar course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar."	x		
Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision.			
* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this please indicate here.			
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.			

Conduct of processes		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are 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.		

Areas of good practice
Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.

I was pleased to see that a variety of assessment methods is being used across the modules, from traditional essays to presentations with student-led class discussion, online discussion, portfolio assignments and critical anthologies of secondary sources, to name just a few. Reflecting recommendations in recent pedagogical research, such diversity enhances student engagement and autonomy and speaks to a range of learning styles.

I saw some very good examples of module handbooks with clear and detailed instructions, including useful guidance on written assignments and how to choose a topic.

Some good examples of modules that combine academic content with potential 'real world' applications and employability skills.

Good evidence of global perspectives in programme content.

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.	Yes	No	N/A *
<i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i>			x
<i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i>			

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

(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.)
n/a

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.
I would like to congratulate the team on delivering such an interesting, interdisciplinary programme that clearly produces some very strong student work. Even at the lower end of the spectrum there is generally a good level of engagement, and feedback given to students is supportive/encouraging. The overall performance of the students is comparable to levels of work in other institutions. On the module preparing students for their dissertations, I was especially impressed by the ambitious and interesting topics submitted by all students I looked at, even those who scored lower marks. This is testimony to the efforts of the teaching team and effective programme design.

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

Some of the dissertations were particularly impressive. Work at the top end was extremely ambitious in scope and demonstrated a high level of skill in interdisciplinary research methods, including some archival research. Such work is a great example of the kind of insightful interdisciplinary work that joint degree students in particular can produce.

Weaknesses were as can be expected (and comparable to other institutions): students held back from scoring higher marks because of difficulties with grammar and expression; lack of depth in understanding, analysis or research.

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

As noted in 'Areas of good practice' above, there is a good range of assessment methods which are working well overall. The standards of the structure, organisation, design and marking overall are to be commended. I saw good evidence of in-depth and supportive feedback, often specifically offering 'feed-forward' on how to improve in the next assignment. It was particularly nice to see constructive feedback in all marking categories, including first-class work. I have made some minor suggestions for enhancement on individual modules to the programme team, but generally everything is looking good.

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

There is good evidence of balanced curriculum content, combining the 'canonical' with some lesser known material and more recent theoretical concerns in literary/cultural studies and history, e.g. questions of intersectionality. The different modules complement each other very well; some modules explicitly articulate how they sit in relation to other units of the degree, which is very useful in terms of a coherent and meaningful learning journey. It was also clear that some individual modules manage to go beyond their specific thematic content and succeed in raising key methodological and theoretical questions about the disciplines of literary studies and history that students can apply more broadly across the degree. There was evidence of module design that explicitly invited students to 'examine and problematize disciplinary boundaries', which is highly appropriate for a joint degree. These strengths in programme design translated into good student performance overall and a very high level of sophistication at the top end of the marking spectrum. Students on this programme appear to be well supported through their journey.

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

I only looked at one module on My Beckett for the purpose of assessment. As far as I can tell it was being used effectively with the kind of course information that I would expect to see in a virtual learning environment.

(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.)

Module content ranges from the more predictable 'canonical' to the innovative, creating a good balance overall. It was also pleasing to see that several modules take a global perspective, contributing positively to awareness of diversity and the internationalisation of students and programme content. Appropriate attention was given to a range of genres and media, reflecting subject benchmark expectations. There was good achievement of learning outcomes across modules. Modules are relatively consistent in content, assessment and outcomes, with some minor variations as can be expected. There was some variation in how the process of moderation was used (or at least to what extent the process was visible to me). Module handbooks also varied in design, content and level of detail. There was no cause for concern, but I recommend a more consistent approach in both these areas.

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

It was evident that staff research expertise clearly feeds into module content and design, resulting in some exciting and cutting edge delivery. I was also impressed by the level of research skill displayed by students, in particular the ways in which students were guided to engage in archival research.

(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 comments at the moment.

(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

External Examiners' Report Checklist**Please comment for all boxes**

Course Materials				
Did you receive?		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Course Handbook(s)? [I did receive module handbooks, though]		x	
b.	Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate (these may be included the Course Handbook)?		x	
c.	Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)?		x	
d.	Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	x		

Draft examination papers				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft papers?		x	
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?		x	
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?	x		
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			x
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			x

Draft coursework				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft coursework?			x
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?			x
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the coursework appropriate?			x
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			x
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			x

Marking Examination Scripts				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?	x		
	(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?			x
<p>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:</p> <p>a) Samples should be determined by a square root of cohort size, no smaller than 6, no larger than 15. However it should be borne in mind that not all work is assessed in a way that makes a square root sample possible and allowance should be made. For example in subjects such as the performing arts where there may be a requirement for an external to come and view a performance instead, or to visit the exhibition of art work.</p> <p>b) Samples to include all classification categories, and it is helpful to concentrate around the boundaries to include some fails.</p> <p>c) Samples to consist of internally moderated work, clearly evidencing the moderation process.</p>				
b.	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	x		
c.	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	x		

Dissertations/project reports				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?	x		
b.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?	x		

Coursework/continuously assessed work				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?	x		
b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	x		

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?			x

Module Board/Progression and Award Boards				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you able to attend the meetings?		x	
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?			x
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Module Board/Progression and Award Boards?			x

Development and support of External Examiners

Please mark the appropriate boxes:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Were you new in post in academic year 2017/18?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you were new:		
(a) Did you access the on-line External Examiner Induction Module?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If not, was there a particular reason?	<input type="text"/>	
(b) Did you receive any specific induction or other support from your School?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Some inexperienced new examiners are formally mentored. Were you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(d) Did you find the mentoring you received helpful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any general or specific comments on the development and support offered by the University, especially improvements you would like to see:

n/a

For External Examiners associated with Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes

If you are an external examiner for any of the University's Pearson provision (HND/HNC level), please complete sections (l) – (n) below to enable the University to capture the data requested by Pearson for its Annual review report.

(l) Any major issues with regard to the HND/HNC course(s) with which you are associated

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(m) Areas of good practice you have identified specifically relating to HND/HNC course(s) with which you are associated

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(n) Any other comments that you wish to make that are related specifically to the HND/HNC course(s) with which you are associated

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