

BA (Hons) English with Creative Writing

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." | yes | |
| 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." | yes | | |
| 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." | yes | |
| 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. |

Handbooks were excellent - innovative, helpful, and creating a real sense of dialogue between teaching staff and students. Assignments generally innovative and wide ranging in scope. Feedback typically very good, very precise, and always helpful and encouraging. Some exciting features in the poetry modules as well as student collaboration on the creation of an anthology. Some examples of student work which are ambitious, risk-taking and commendable because of that. I get a very real sense of the student body being fortunate in having a teaching staff who are passionate, professional, creative, sympathetic and engaged.

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. <i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i> | Yes | No | N/A * |
| | | | N?A |
| <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). |
|--|
| Very meticulously and exhaustively done. |

| (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.) |
|--|
| I think the reflective work in CW modules could be tightened up and made more critically sophisticated - so that such work is more analytical and less descriptive; more references to texts, reading experiences, books, cultural-literary context. I understand this is being looked at further. |

| (c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions. |
|--|
| My main area of concern is that of basic writing skills: grammar, expression, use of punctuation including use of apostrophe (!), register, general sophistication, or lack, of in terms of expression -; students gaining lower grades were not infrequently writing poorly (sometime very poorly), and often not adhering to basic academic and/or presentational conventions – correct use of italics for |

example.

In fact questions of presentation affected students across all levels, so even students scoring well might not be using italics the right way and/or still expressing themselves poorly at times. There was, I felt, at moments, a gap between the marker's correct identification of poor writing skills and/or presentation, and the grade given. I thought, in general, that grades tended to be on the generous side because of this and I would suggest a more emphatic rubric pointing out that marks will be deducted for poor writing/presentation. Clearly some students need to follow their lecturers' advice re proofreading and reading out their work aloud to themselves. Or, if necessary, seeking further help with their writing/presentation. All of this, I would imagine, could also affect student employability.

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

Some useful, pragmatic, and intellectually interesting work in the field of CW regarding notions of, and awareness of the literary and publishing world. Namely how to engage with the publishing world, how to disseminate work, how to pitch work, how to learn about the publishing world or 'literary market'; how to employ social media as well as more conventional channels.

I have commented on previous occasions about the quality and approach of reflective work in CW modules - it needs to be more than a descriptive add-on. and become, in many cases, a more analytical and inter-textual appraisal of CW submitted. It's good to see what students are reading and here too they have the opportunity to bring over their English Lit skills to the reflective piece.

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

All of this was generally fine, a good sense of structure and organisation, and I am now seeing more English Lit work too, and although feedback was typically very good, the given grades could sometimes seem on the generous side - I make further comments elsewhere.

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

Curriculum design and the general management of the modules/programme provides a sense of organisation and intellectual liveliness . I think - see elsewhere - there are some issues regarding writing skills, especially at the lower grade level, and in some instances across the grade bands there is evidence of poor presentational skills – correct adherence to academic conventions and general expression/grammar etc. This is, potentially, and in actual fact, affecting the performance of some students. I think this is an important area to consider.

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

N/A

(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.)

I have provided detailed comments/ interim reports regarding modules examined over year and have had a good deal of useful communication with PL - I think the range and type of assessments are useful and exciting, often mindful of employability and/or transferable skills.

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

Handbooks and advice and general guidelines excellent; I get a real sense of a meaningful staff-student interaction and engagement, a combination of professionalism and friendliness, and professional engagement with student CW always seems simultaneously sympathetic and useful in terms of how to improve future work.

(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). |
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| N/A |

External Examiners' Report Checklist

Please comment for all boxes

| Course Materials | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|----|-----|
| Did you receive? | | Yes | No | N/A |
| a. | Course Handbook(s)? | yes | | |
| b. | Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate (these may be included the Course Handbook)? | yes | | |
| c. | Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)? | yes | | |
| d. | Assessment briefs/marketing criteria? | Not always / see comments re English dissertations | | |

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

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

| 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? | yes | | |
| | (ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory? | | | |
| <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? | yes | | |
| c. | Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? | yes | | |

| Dissertations/project reports | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----|--|-----|
| | | Yes | No | N/A |
| a. | Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? | YES | | |
| b. | Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate? | | I had no clear info regarding marking criteria for English Lit dissertations | |

| 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? | YES | | |
| b. | Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory? | Mostly yes ; I think some marks a little bit generous | | |

| 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? | | | N/A |

| Module Board/Progression and Award Boards | | | | |
|---|--|-----|----|-----|
| | | Yes | No | N/A |
| | | | | |

For use from March 2017

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|----|---|-----|--|--|
| a. | Were you able to attend the meetings? | YES | | |
| b. | Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction? | YES | | |
| c. | Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Module Board/Progression and Award Boards? | YES | | |

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 2016/17? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you were new:

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| (a) Did you access the on-line External Examiner Induction Module? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If not, was there a particular reason? | <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | |
| (b) Did you receive any specific induction or other support from your School? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Some inexperienced new examiners are formally mentored. Were you? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input 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:

Very useful contact with PL over the year and meaningful and friendly encounter with wider team at exam board and after.

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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