

## BAH 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.

The detailed feedback provided, the care given to students with extenuating circumstances, and the wide range of assessments are all impressive. They demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring a fair and supporting learning environment for all students.

## 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>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A *</b>
	<b>X</b>		
<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).
The organisation, decision-making and confidentiality of the meeting were on the whole exemplary and in line with both subject benchmarks and QA expectations.

(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.
There was a wide range of marks, with students' work at a comparable level to that I have seen elsewhere (Goldsmiths, LSE, King's College, London, Keele, UEA).

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.
The two semesters of work suggests that students performed better in modules with a British focus and less well in modules covering less familiar parts of the world. That said, I do not think any firm conclusion can be reached based on a single year's mark average, especially as this was most evident in small 3 <sup>rd</sup> year modules, where a single strong or weak performance could skew the entire module average. What was

also clear about students was that there seemed to be a well-nurtured desire to learn, to expand their knowledge, conceptual grasp (with some theory) and a good application of skills, tested through a diverse array of assessments at all levels.

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

Overall, assessments seemed well designed and clearly structured in line with each module's aims and objectives. The marking of exams and other forms of assessment was largely clearly first marked and moderated, in line with QA expectations and practices within the discipline. However, I did not have the actual exam sent to me for one module, Slaves, Settlers and Subalterns, which made it difficult to mark.

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

There were no identifiable issues with access to resources, teaching, or curriculum. All seemed to be carefully put together and linked well throughout the different levels, with students clearly able to develop an interest in subsequent modules/years.

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

For the modules examined, staff and students seemed to use My Beckett well. The use of an interactive board for commentary in Sea and Society was particularly well developed, and I am planning to adapt elements for it in a module of my own at Keele.

**(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 am very impressed with the detailed feedback offered to students; quite often, students are presented with very clear guidance on how to improve their work and what they have done well. I'd probably mark some differently, but they would remain firsts, 2.1s, etc. so overall, marking seems consistent and in line with assessment and marking guidelines. I was particularly impressed with the consistency of marking between modules and the wide range of assessments, as well as the diversity of module content. Most use a set feedback form and some do not – please ensure consistency and it is worth ensuring there is a large-text version of the feedback form, as the current graph at the top may be hard for some to read. It may also be worth considering crass derivation as an offence, where a significant part of the essay is in someone else's words, akin to plagiarism but properly referenced.

I do have a few comments regarding specific modules:

Slaves: if marking an exam with two questions, please provide separate marks and comments to better show how the overall mark was achieved.

Dissertations: I understand this was a mistake, but please ensure 2<sup>nd</sup> marking is provided and it is clear how a compromise has been reached, if there has been disagreement. However, I do want to commend the quality and range of work. There are some very strong dissertations relating to French history, but the breadth of modern history topics covered, and the methodologies employed by the students, should be praised as reflecting significantly high quality of diverse teaching from staff.

Atlantic Revolutions/Paris: I thought the marking here was clear and decision-making very clear and well explained. However, I did think some of the firsts deserved to be firsts but were higher than I would have given and compared to other modules. I think the classification was entirely justified however, and this is just a minor note for the future, to perhaps take more account of spelling and grammar in particular when marking 1sts.

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

There is often a clear link between the module and the teacher's own research, which should be encouraged. Students often pick up on this and there is clear growth during the module (especially evident through Sea's assessment), and staff at the meeting seemed keen to adopt and update modules in line with best professional practice within the discipline.

**(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 found the focus on module assessment outcomes at the external exam boards troubling. While it can be helpful to compare average marks between modules, it would have been more constructive if this could be compared across years as well, as one year may naturally have an irregularity and it is dangerous to draw any conclusions about effective teaching from one year's averages. The average marks that were presented seemed very much in keeping with other universities.

**(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).**

**External Examiners' Report Checklist**

**Please comment for all boxes**

<b>Course Materials</b>				
Did you receive?		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	Course Handbook(s)?	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? <b>I was not sent the exam for Slaves, Settlers and Subalterns</b>		X	

<b>Draft examination papers</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	X		

<b>Draft coursework</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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?			
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><b>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>b) Samples to include all classification categories, and it is helpful to concentrate around the boundaries to include some fails.</b></p> <p><b>c) Samples to consist of internally moderated work, clearly evidencing the moderation process.</b></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?  <b>I need to stress that, while I was impressed with this for other modules, I was not sent the second marks for Dissertations, making it difficult to assess how that process had worked, and when (or how) marks had changed.</b>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not, was there a particular reason?	<b>I was told it was being updated. I am happy to complete it whenever.</b>	
(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:**

I do think the supposed online induction would be helpful, and would have preferred to complete it before completing my first year in the post.

## 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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