

BA (Hons) Education Studies 2017/18

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.

Innovative assessment mechanisms which support the students and allow appropriate and more inclusive engagement.

Employability and enterprise focus across the programme is admirable.

Examples of very detailed feedback to students that will enable both students (higher and lower performance) to improve.

There are many useful thematic and theoretical strands that are running through the programme that will enable students to produce written work that is sufficiently critical of the ways that we 'do' education in the UK and beyond. This is exemplified in the final major projects produced by third years. Much excellent work here. This is a credit to both students and staff members.

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).
The module board attended was smooth running, well organised and considered the students, staff and externals with courtesy. I appreciated being able to give the feedback orally as well as in the form of a report.

(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.
Yes, I can confirm that the work of the students was comparable to other higher education institutions with which I am familiar.

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.
The range of work examined, illustrated strengths and weaknesses that I am familiar with from my own institution (University of Brighton). Students in the main are very well supported in the ways that they can move their work forward.

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

The assessment processes and mechanisms were a strength of the provision. The students are presented with very varied, and innovative assessment practices.

There is transparency for all students regarding the approach that is undertaken for assessment. Students are able to see with ease, what is required of them. This is very good practice.

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

The overall standards of performance are very impressive. This indicates that the programme of study has offered a sufficient platform for the very highest standards to be obtained.

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

I cannot fully comment on this, in relation to the overall course. I can say, however, that from a user perspective as an external examiner, My Beckett was exceptionally well structured. If this is replicated for the students, this will prove very beneficial for students.

The e-portfolios were exceptionally impressive and suggest outstanding practice within the department and beyond. Very impressive practice. I found much of this work to be very moving too, because the students made very personal accounts of their background, experience etc.. Thank you.

(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.)

There is much very relevant and contemporary curriculum content. This is illustrated in the module handbooks, assessment tasks and assignments. The feedback on the written work was almost always detailed and indicated clearly what might have been improved in the assignments and the ways that students could develop their writing.

Social Perspectives (CRN 11311) Level 5

It was a pleasure to read these assignments and view the presentations. There is a strong set of marks produced across the cohort. Feedback provided to all students is likely to be very useful to enable the students to improve. The review points note that there are some issues in academic writing for some of the lower graded assignments. Having a whole group feedback session at the start of semester two as outlined in the review is an excellent idea.

Inclusive Education (CRN 15967) Level 5

I have very much enjoyed reading the students' assignments. There were examples of excellent writing that were a pleasure to read. These students have received the high marks that are well deserved. There were other examples where the students had received lower marks. These were also appropriate. The

written feedback, alongside on-text comments, is useful to support the students. For those who have not passed the essay component it might be helpful to provide more detailed feedback as to how to improve the assignment. The module leader has clearly reflected carefully on the module.

A Primer on Education Theory and Practice (CRN 11313) Level 5

It was very interesting to read the assignments and related feedback. There is a broad spread of marks. The feedback given to Layla Zrar (75%) was exemplary. Layla achieved the highest mark in the sample sent. The students who received the lower marks however, generally appeared to have less detailed feedback. The students achieving the lower marks might be more usefully supported by more extensive feedback, including marking on-text, to demonstrate very specific issues and strengths that occur throughout the paper. There was a thoughtful review of the module and evidence of a responsive system in place to address student feedback. Given the nature of the module, level, and length of the essay, students might be encouraged to consult more sources in the preparation of the assignment. This would strengthen the writing quality even further.

N.B. In the scanning of the documents some of the end of line text feedback was cut off which made the reading slightly more difficult.

Research Methods & Ethics (CRN 13674) Level 5

This module has clearly provided a useful foundation for independent research at level 6. There is a range of ability indicated within the sample and the full mark range has been employed. There was feedback provided for each student. It was very useful for the students to have an explicit comment from the second marker. This appears to be particularly good practice. It might be rather more motivating for the students if the main feedback was a little more positively constructed. This is noted for all students, even those achieving the highest marks, but is particularly relevant for the very lowest performing students.

Ecological Positioning in Global Education (CRN 14619) Level 5

Exceptionally good work was produced through the group presentations. The slide shows were extensive and thoughtful. The module leader has provided some detailed comments about the delivery of the module alongside some ideas to move the module on and potentially increase engagement too. The feedback to students was exemplary. Caring and insightful comments were provided on each assignment.

PPD Placement (CRN 11312) Level 5

This was an innovative way to assess the students using both e-portfolio and presentations. This has clearly produced some high-level learning. Feedback is thoughtful and thorough. The employability/enterprise theme is usefully developed in this module ahead of the final year and students appear to have embraced this opportunity.

Career Positioning (CRN 11315) Level 6

This is a very innovative assessment mechanism that clearly allows the students to achieve very highly. The e-portfolios were powerful assessment tools that prompted thoughtful and personal responses. A privilege to view these. Thank you for this pleasure.

Children & Young People's Workforce (CRN 11318) Level 6

The students have produced some strong assignment writing across this sample. Even those receiving lower marks have written effectively about education and its political context. These were very enjoyable essays to read. The module leader has suggested appropriate ways to engage students further as the module evolves. The feedback on the written work was detailed and indicated clearly what might have been improved in the essay and the ways that students could develop their writing.

Major Independent Study (12833) Level 6

There is some exceptionally rich writing across the sample offered here. Students have clearly benefitted from the module(s) at Level 5 acting as preparation for this substantial piece of assessed work. There is a

broad range of education related studies undertaken and students show real engagement in their topics. I very much enjoyed looking at these.

I have identified concern above regarding T. C. Molloy's dissertation in which the student undertook a focus group with several groups of secondary age pupils (Year 7-12) asking direct questions about mental health, including that of the pupils themselves. One pupil states, for example, that they have tried to kill themselves twelve times. This is an exceptionally sensitive research arena for the most experienced researcher. There is little or no discussion of ethics offered here and yet clearly this research would require substantial consideration prior to entering the field, if indeed access was allowed at all. The other dissertations were explicit in their ethical consideration. It would be advisable for the module team to review ethical procedures in relation to all research, but particularly that of a highly sensitive area such as this. I would question the individual mark awarded for this dissertation in relation to this, but otherwise agree with the sample – so a note for reflection by the module team only.

Tutors have generally provided some excellent feedback. Some tutors have offered very detailed, careful feedback. Others however, have only provided very brief feedback. As the students have clearly engaged substantially with this module, it would be advisable to ensure that there is some parity in the feedback students received. This is currently not the case, and I would urge the module team to look across the sample at the feedback variance ahead of next year's delivery.

This module was a pleasure to examine. The programme is clearly producing very engaged and critical students who show the capacity to think deeply about education.

Conclusion

Across all of the modules marking was consistent and fair. The paperwork showed evidence of second marking/moderation etc. All materials were clearly presented and there was sufficient clarity regarding the assessment tasks, content, timescale, etc. I was able to access all work and feedback with ease.

It has been an absolute pleasure to be able to view the module structure and support, student responses to the assignment task, and the feedback given to students. Thank you.

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

There is evidence of knowledge mobilisation emerging in the ways that the research interests of staff are reflected in the students' work. This may be a two-way process as is typical in such settings, although more difficult to evidence as an external examiner.

(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

External Examiners' Report Checklist

Please comment for all boxes

Course Materials				
Did you receive?		Yes	No	N/A
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?	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?			
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		

Draft coursework				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft coursework?	x		
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?			
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?			
<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		