

BA (Hons) Performing Arts 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."	✓	
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."	✓		
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."	✓	
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.

- Feedback on student work is excellent across the board. It is supportive, kind and has a great personal feel
- Excellent embedding of personal/cultural awareness in learning activities
- The course offers a wealth of opportunities to explore the work of and work directly with a diverse range of practising artists

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 *
			✓
<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).
<p>The Progression and Award Board was conducted with clarity and efficiency.</p> <p>I was pleased to hear short summaries from module leaders about the delivery of modules and how they planned to develop module delivery as a result of their own personal reflection and student feedback.</p> <p>I was also pleased to witness a strong level of engagement with the minutiae of results from members of the team. Members of the team were able to respond with authority to the questions raised. This showed evidence of a rigorous processing of marks, and clear professional integrity.</p>

(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.
In my view, the level of student performance is very much comparable to other institutions.

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

I was particularly impressed by students' ability to reflect critically on their work. These reflections evidenced a high level of maturity and personal responsibility, in my view.

Students also exhibited a strong application of the material delivered in lectures to the work of professional artists and in their own performance work. Weaknesses in lower performing students tended to be in a lack of engagement with theory/professional practice (and little referencing of sources), an over-reliance on academic sources to make arguments, and an overly descriptive approach to written work.

In practical work, students presented a broad range of skills across the cohort. There was a strong level of awareness of the performance moment, and some good timing and ensemble practice. I saw evidence of some excellent creative responses in movement. In terms of weaknesses some students lacked conviction and commitment to the physical work.

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

Assessment is well designed across the board, and assignment briefs are fully articulated to students in written material available via the My Beckett site.

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

The curriculum looks to offer students a well-rounded and rigorously informed course.

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

My Beckett is used consistently across modules to support student learning by offering lecture material and additional learning resources.

(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 is strong and there is excellent consistency within and across modules. Learning outcomes are aligned well to learning activities.

In two of the modules I noticed that the four listed learning outcomes are being assessed in both assessments, and that across these two assessments, there are several elements the students have to meet. It would be good for the team to look at whether they feel the students are being over-assessed in this way.

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

There have been some issues with engagement on this first year that the programme has run. I think that returning to face-to-face interviews and auditions is a good strategy for helping students to gain a more detailed understanding of the programme and learning expectations, and ultimately to help with engagement and retention.

(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)?	✓		
b.	Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate (these may be included the Course Handbook)?	✓		
c.	Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)?	✓		
d.	Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	✓		

Draft examination papers				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft papers?			✓
	(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?			✓
	(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?			✓
	(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?			✓
c.	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			✓

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

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?	✓		
b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	✓		

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?			✓

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