

Form 'External Examiners - Leeds School Of Arts' for

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Page 1 of 9



**LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY**

Introduction

Leeds School Of Arts

Undergraduate

- BILLU Illustration(UG)

External Examiner ID

Name Of External Examiner:

First Name

Last Name

Collaborative Institution:

Date of Main Progression and Award Board Attended:

Introduction

External Examiners are required by the terms of their appointment to submit an annual report. The report will be considered in depth during course annual monitoring activity. A record of the University's responses to examiners' reports also forms part of the documentation for this activity. It is also used in compiling our annual report on external examining.

Your report will be widely circulated and shared with Students and therefore we ask you not to refer to anyone by name or in a way that allows identification of an individual.

Please complete all sections of the report unless they are not relevant (such as you do not examine Collaborative or Degree Apprenticeship Provision). This report must be **submitted within 28 days of the main Progression and Award Board** and failure to submit within the required timescale may result in termination of your tenure as an external examiner without good reason.

NO EXAMINING FEES WILL BE PAID IF YOU FAIL TO SUBMIT YOUR ANNUAL REPORT.

Page 1 of 9

Page 2 of 9

Section A

External Examiner's Report Summary

Please indicate 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](#) applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements and [Leeds Beckett University regulations](#)

If any boxes are ticked "No" the Dean of School or nominee will be alerted and will oversee the response from the Course Director.

[\[HK1\]](#) Added Reference to correct section of Regulations in here.

Standards set

A1) "Threshold academic standards set for the modules/courses meet the applicable national academic standards." (required)

See 14.3.6a of regulations

Student achievement

A2) "Students who have been awarded qualifications have had the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar." (required)

14.3.6b of regulations

A2b) Please provide any further comment on the comparability of any associated collaborative provision:

Conduct of processes

A3) "Processes for assessment and the determination of awards are reliable, rigorous and conducted in line with the regulations at all times." (required)

see 14.3.6c of regulations

Professional Body Requirements

A4) Do the learning outcomes and assessment of the courses allow successful students to meet the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies criteria at the appropriate level'. (required)

see 14.3.6a of regulations

Actions from last year's report

A5) In respect of your feedback, has any required action from last year's report been satisfactorily responded to? (required)

Issues/point for clarity during the year

A6) Did you raise any issues/point for clarity throughout the year? (required)

No

Areas of good practice/commendation

A7) Please outline any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features you have observed in relation to learning, teaching and assessment:

- The team have continued to develop the broad range of theoretical and practical interests that manifest themselves in post-doctoral research. While engagement with the wider learning community can be challenging, the capacity of the team to adapt their practices into positive/progressive learning experiences for the students is commendable.
- Integration of scholarly and research practice in the curriculum and the learning experiences of the students. Following on from the clear improvements to curriculum developed in the last academic year the team are continuing to positively integrate current research practice into the curriculum experience.
- Pedagogical innovation continues to sit at the heart of the curriculum development process as evidence in the teaching and learning materials. The team have developed approaches that synthesize pedagogic innovation with practice based research, again these approaches are pointed towards curriculum development.
- Further focus on post graduation working practice and the application of skills has been 'enabling' for students. Following on from discussions last year and recommendations made in the report, greater focus on potential career routes has clearly supported the students to make considered and ambitious decisions about their next steps.

Page 2 of 9

Page 3 of 9

Section B

Academic Standards

Please advise on the Academic Standards for the Programme:

B1) Do the Courses and its modules continue to be coherent and generally up-to-date and at an appropriate level to enable students to meet the relevant aims and learning outcomes? (required)

Yes

B2) What do you believe were the strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills? (required)

-

B3) Are the marking/grading criteria or marking schemes set at the appropriate level of study and have they been consistently applied including internal moderation processes? (required)

Yes

B4) Did students receive adequate and helpful feedback to inform their future learning? (required)

Yes

B5) In your view please indicate how well you feel the course prepares students for progression to managerial or professional employment or further study? (required)

0= not at all, 10= fully

8

B6) Please provide any further comments to indicate how the course could better prepare students for progression to managerial or professional employment or further study (if applicable)

While: "Further focus on post graduation working practice and the application of skills has been 'enabling' for students" module 6.2 still presents challenges for both staff and students in terms of its logic and meaningful integration into the final year. Students reported that, comparatively, the Unit

appears vague. Better preparation and 'lead in' to this important experience may help clarify/contextualise the aims of the module.

B7) Have you had the opportunity to comment on or contribute to a review of the course including any proposed modifications or enhancements to provision?
(required)

Yes

B8) If you have answered no to any of the above or would like to add any further points of clarity, please expand in the box below:

Page 3 of 9

Page 4 of 9

Section C

Assessment

Please advise on the Assessment Process for the Programme:

C1) The internal assessment / examination procedures are comparable with similar awards in the UK. (required)

Yes

C2) Procedures for the Exam Boards were fairly and rigorously conducted (including procedures governing extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct and borderline performance), and in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations. (required)

Yes

C3) The design and structure of the assessment methods used were appropriate; there was comparability within and across modules/awards in terms of level and their effectiveness in measuring the overall learning outcomes. (required)

Yes

C4) There was sufficient rigour in the achievement of learning outcomes in professional placements / work-based learning / work experience (where relevant).

Yes

C5) The moderation process is rigorous and there is consistency in marking standards. (required)

Yes

C6) The range of exam papers / assignments provided for sampling purposes and their appropriateness in terms of subject / level / learning outcomes were appropriate. (required)

Yes

C7) If You have answered no to any of the above or would like to add any further points of clarity, please expand in the box below:

Page 4 of 9

Page 5 of 9

Section D

Organisation and Arrangements

Please advise on the organisation and arrangements for you undertaking this role:

D1) I was new in post this academic year. (required)

No

D2) The University has helped me to undertake my role effectively. (required)

Yes

D3) I am satisfied with the range of external examiner activities undertaken and with my involvement in assessment procedures at module level. (required)

Yes

D4) I am satisfied with the appropriateness and timing of information, of draft examination papers for approval and student work for moderation. (required)

Yes

D5) I am satisfied with the on-line induction training designed to familiarise External Examiners with the University's Regulations/Procedures concerning assessment.

Newly appointed External Examiners only

Yes

D6) I am satisfied with the level of support received from my mentor.

External Examiners new to the role only

N/A

D7) I am satisfied with the programme-level induction provided by the Course Director to familiarise me with the programme itself. (required)

Yes

D8) Are there any general or specific comments on the development and support offered by the University, especially improvements you would like to see:

None

D9) If You have answered no to any of the above or would like to add any further points of clarity, please expand in the box below:

Page 5 of 9

Page 6 of 9

Section E

Collaborative Provision

Please indicate if you have been satisfied with the following:

E) Do you examine collaborative provision?

Yes

E1) Students' performance provided evidence of access to appropriate learning resources at the Partner.

Only complete if relevant.

Yes

E2) The operation and management of the assessment process and Board of Examiners between the University and partner was satisfactory. (required)

Only complete if relevant.

Yes

E3) The effectiveness of arrangements in place to ensure that the standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where, or how, programmes are delivered, and who delivers them. (required)

Only complete if relevant.

Yes

E4) If you have answered no to any of the above or would like to add any further points of clarity, please expand in the box below:

Page 6 of 9

Page 7 of 9

Section F

Degree Apprenticeships

F1) Were you involved in the examination of Apprenticeship Provision?

No

Open comments

Page 7 of 9

Page 8 of 9

Section G

End Point Assessment

G1) I have seen evidence that Apprentices have the opportunity to practice the assessment methods that will be used at End Point Assessment before undertaking the End Point Assessment.

G2) If you examine integrated apprenticeship provision, please provide specific comments on the suitability and content of End Point Assessment:

G3) If you have answered no to any of the above or would like to add any further points of clarity, please expand in the box below:

Where applicable, a copy of your report will be shared with the Chief External Examiner who is appointed to provide oversight of related modules and/or courses.

Page 8 of 9

Page 9 of 9

Final Comments

Are there any other final comments you would like to make in relation to your role as External Examiner?

Overall performance:

- The team continue to adopt an experimental and progressive approach to the discipline and learning through the subject with a clearly defined focus on processes, methods of intelligent and critical making and knowledge construction through practice.
- The range and scope of work produced by the graduating cohort describes confidence and a curiosity about ideas and their articulation through modes of visual communication.
- In the main critical thinking is evidenced effectively throughout and more explicitly in module 6.2.
- Students describe high levels of reflection in practice, leading to thoughtful and well supported choices about the next stage of their development.

Strengths:

- Students describe a sophisticated grasp of subject and its potential applications/contexts.
- Students report excellent levels of support and a focus on their wellbeing. The community of learners described gratitude to the staff and felt 'known' further contributing towards a substantive sense of community.
- Students reported that they appreciated and benefitted from 'Hands on teaching' and understood that studio based practice was at the heart of their learning experience, despite some of the obvious resource challenges faced by the team over the years, they have worked hard to maintain an educational ethos that places the students learning and wellbeing at the centre.
- In the final submission and show there is an impressive scope to the work (material and intellectual) and evidence of cognitive flexibility/resilience in process.
- Students appeared to have fully embraced the (necessary) notion of illustration as a foundation/springboard for a varied creative career.

Potential growth area:

- Despite obvious positive developments Students reported back that their perception of 6.2 was

that it was vague and disconnected following discussion with the team I would suggest consideration of the overall narrative and incremental development of the 'contextualisation of practice'.

Structure and organisation:

- Structure of the course is well considered and intelligently delivered
- Well communicated and understood by the students
- CAGD continues to be an exemplar VLE

Assessment:

- The assessment of the work appears to be fair, rigorous and transparent. The confidence that the students describe in their teaching staff supports the observation that assessment processes are professional and of a high standard.

During the interim visit the following notes were taken during conversation with a cross year student group:

Conversation with students at the interim visit:

In response to the question "What is the best thing about the course?"

- Staff team, they are 'regular and present'
- Apparent that the students felt 'known' by their staff team and that their familiarity with the students enabled them to offer advice and support that is personalized.
- It was felt that the variety of voices and sometime conflicting advice was a positive.
- I asked a follow on question that referenced that 'confidence' in the process and wanting to understand the journey that had been undertaken which gave permission to own the assessment and developmental process to this extent.
- Students reported back that they felt encouraged and supported to behave in this way – that they understood the rationale for this approach and that it was derived from a need to be process and not outcome led.
- They talked about the emphasis on exploration, experimentation, discovery (revelation)
- In response to a question about examples of key turning points in the course the following example was offered: a project that asked students to draw one animal in numerous different ways – the permission given felt like it was 'unlocking' potential.
- In this context we also talked about the space, specifically the 3rd year space, and some of the challenges – it feels restrictive, there is no sink (unfit for purpose) and is physically removed/remote.
- In response to questions about the experience of working with the Pass Fail Unit.
- P/F felt 'easy' but in a very positive way – in that it was again a permission giver and a means of developing confidence (in a system of assessment)
- P/F removed pressure and appears to have supported the development of intrinsic motivation in relation to practice – although this was not universal and the conversation turned to the function of grades as a way of indicating progress/success as well as functioning to motivate.
- CAGD has, again, functioned well in this regard. Although this may be to do with the availability of the CL and general commitment level.
- CAGD has been a critical tool in elucidating the course, its structure and purpose.
- In response to a question about how prepared for exit students felt (incl. professional development). Students responded in the following way:
- Not committed to a career in Illustration but do think that they want to freelance

- Unsure what is out there, or how to access/understand it –
- Not really sure where to find jobs, or how to start this process
- Felt that the job market was a mystery
- However it was apparent that a number of students were very proactive and were actively engaged in developing their own creative community, working to produce projects, building networks, project managing, identifying potential client bases, activating social media – we discussed the implicit value in these activities and the (probable) need to make them explicit and ascribe value to them as part of professional development.
- In response to a question that asked what they would change, students responded in the following ways:
- Change the studio situation, offer a space that is fit for purpose, enables community and interaction with others in similar disciplines, includes not excludes Illustration students from interdisciplinary activity and proximity to resources, creates the opportunity for chance encounters, collaboration, and peer to peer learning.
- There was general agreement that Illustration students had been structurally excluded and were therefore unable to fully develop a sense of belonging – evident that there was an appetite for working alongside other creative disciplines and that space and location were critical factors in this discussion.
- Practical concerns like getting basic materials into a shared space proved problematic and were also inhibiting students' ability to use the space effectively.

The curriculum and teaching:

- Students have an understanding of the scope of the discipline that underpins a confident and exploratory practice.
- Curriculum has clearly/intelligently been designed to scaffold, test and motivate the students to

take creative risks and develop identity this continues to be a testimony to the enthusiasm, intelligence and diligence of the teaching team.

- Physical resources including the 3rd year studio space have continued to present challenges – the recent changes, while disruptive, seem positive in terms of enabling proximity and an opportunity to build community across years
- It is important for illustration practitioners to have access to the means of image making that meet the demands of the contemporary creative world and to ensure that students of the creative arts are not restricted in the access to the means to produce. It is apparent that continued investment in high end contemporary technologies (VR, immersive tech, physical computing etc.) will be required if the course is to maintain its approach effectively. (rewrite)

Staff research:

- The staff have a broad range of theoretical and practical interests that manifest themselves in post-doctoral research and engagement with the wider learning community. It is encouraging to see how these interests are capitalised upon in the development of the curriculum and the learning experiences of the students. The teaching staff have described a keen interest in the development of pedagogy to meet the constantly evolving needs of their students. There are compelling examples of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the materials presented. The level of care described by the students appears to be equally well developed through the curriculum content, including additional materials produced to support students' capacities in self-efficacy and autonomy.

End of Tenure Report

If you are at the end of your tenure as External Examiner, please provide an overview of the development of the programme during your term of office. This overview will be of value to the University, the programme team and to the incoming External Examiner.

Please include commentary regarding academic standards and student achievement across cohorts during the examiner's period of appointment:

This Section is only to be completed by external examiners at the end of their tenure.

I am very grateful to Ian Truelove and the BA Illustration team for their patience and support in guiding me through the external examining process during a tenure that has seen the sector navigate one of the most challenging periods in its history.

As we transitioned rapidly into online and blended provision during the pandemic and subsequent period of lockdown the BA Illustration team deployed their existing knowledge of platforms such as MS Teams and CAGD to great effect. While nobody could have predicted that the entire world would have to move into that online space the BA Illustration team's curiosity about the potential of online platforms, prior to lockdown, presaged that epic event effectively. The net result was a positive and productive transition, given the circumstances, enabling the team to mitigate the negative effects of remote learning in the context of art and design education practices. I mention this because it addresses the question posed, in my view, appropriately. The teams' ability to maintain academic standards, cultivate a sense of community and ensure student achievement during that time does them huge credit and underpins a collective commitment to the wellbeing of students, staff and course.

As we proceeded out of lockdown the staff continued to deploy effective strategies for transition back to the physical space and the students' testimony illustrates this clearly.

I have had the privilege of seeing the course develop and adapt, despite some of the significant challenges presented as the cohort grew year on year and the planning for resourcing and physical space appeared to struggle to keep up. Thankfully, with a new leadership and evidently more explicit support for the staff and students, there appears to be a clearer direction and, it is hoped, greater stability for the course and its teaching team. Given the time and correct conditions I am confident that this will enable the team to continue to build on their innovative approach to teaching and learning through the discipline of Illustration.

I would like to add a note of caution. It is apparent that the burden of care for students, who have had an incredibly difficult journey at a formative stage in their development, has fallen almost exclusively to the teaching staff. This, I would argue, is common across the sector but it is beholden on any institution to build awareness of the effects of this additional labour and develop systems of support for staff.

Incidents of burn-out and stress related leave are on the rise and action needs to be taken to reverse this trend while building the necessary capacity in teaching teams to be able to cope effectively with the changing circumstances. I am sure that this is something that the University is seriously considering but given the evidence of fatigue that I experienced during my tenure, immediate action needs to be taken.

Once again, I would like to thank Ian and the team – it is been a great

Email Address (required)

Date (required)

Page 9 of 9

