

Form 'External Examiners - Leeds School Of Arts' for External Examiners - Leeds School Of Arts

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Page 1 of 9



Introduction

Leeds School Of Arts

Undergraduate

- BGRAD Graphic Design(UG)
- GADES Graphic Arts and Design(UG)

External Examiner ID

Name Of External Examiner:

First Name

Last Name

Collaborative Institution:

Date of Main Progression and Award Board Attended:

20-Jun-2023

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

N/A

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)

Yes

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:

This is my final year in my role as External Examiner and this year I have had the opportunity to see the second cohort of students complete the new BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme. This group of students were just beginning their HE learning journey when the pandemic approached and unfortunately experienced a significant amount of time online. Despite these challenges, this Level 06 group have demonstrated resilience and professionalism in their learning journey resulting in a strong graduating cohort. This could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of the Graphic Design team, to ensure these students were not disadvantaged at any stage in their learning journey. As stated in my previous reports, when it was safe to do so, the supportive learning environment provided by programme staff and university ensured a smooth transition when students returned to campus and face to face teaching.

The End of Year Show this year was a fantastic display of work showcasing the wide range of projects and outcomes. This is a valuable experience and a celebration for students in preparing and displaying their work to potential employers and for other employment and networking opportunities. This year, the very successful Graphic Design show branding, designed by a team of Graphic Design students, also linked into the wider school Art and Design show, bringing a cohesive identity across Leeds School of Arts.

Each year in my report, I highlight the course VLE, CAGD, as a distinctive and innovative asset to the programme and across the wider school. The effectiveness and robustness of this online space was essential throughout the Covid pandemic when all learning and teaching moved online. Each year through my conversations with Level 06 students, they commend CAGD as a valuable and integral part of their learning experience. Importantly, CAGD platform allows for a positive user experience for all students where they can source important information, upload and view work and connect with their peers and tutors. This is now embedded as an integral and valuable part of the programme.

The Level 06 students I spoke to felt very supported throughout their learning journey with structured access to regular tutorials and advice. They felt encouraged particularly in their final year to take ownership of their practice and undertake projects aligned with their own particular interests and future career pathways. Professional Practice talks are very important part for students to help develop their professional practice awareness, knowledge, and confidence. The students commented on the good timing of these how they really benefitted from them. These should continue to be resourced.

6.1 and 6.3, Studio Practice and Critical Study weaved together allows for demonstration of learning in implicit and explicit ways. The Critical study demonstrates the wider context of where studio practice is situated. The Critical Study symposium in December allows dissemination, presentation / communication skills, sharing knowledge and peer-learning. The choice of a video essay or written submission in Semester 02 allows for inclusive assessment. There is an increase in the number of video essays submitted in Semester 02 this year which is exciting to see. Positive feedback from Level 06 students acknowledges the benefits of research, and presentation skills but also key transferrable and technical skills.

6.2 The introduction of the IMA Live Project in Semester 01 was a very positive experience for students this year. As this module has a formative assessment point at the end of Semester 01, this project is delivered at an important point, allowing for steady and effectively spaced submission deadlines. The interim review of draft portfolio at the end of Semester 01 allows students to reflect and importantly map out the direction of their portfolio content for the end of Semester 02.

As highlighted each year, the resources available to students, for example, screenprinting, relief printing, letterpress, photography resources, book-binding, risograph printing, these are all excellent and allow students to be open and knowledgeable to the potential use of these processes in their practice. Again, this year, this is evident in the strong process-led project outcomes and in the strong and wide-ranging work displayed in the end of year show exhibition.

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)

The new BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme allows students from Level 04 right through to Level 06 to become creative and open-minded practitioners. They are encouraged to be experimental, to take risks and to develop their own creative voice.

The structure of studio practice in Level 04 and Level 05 and introduction to research and critical thinking works very well for the student learning experience as it allows for wider knowledge and understanding, and social, cultural, historical links with studio practice to be made in preparation for Level 06.

The Level 06 Critical Study is a particular strength of the programme as it allows students to reflect and contextualise their practice. The Critical Study symposium at the end of Semester 01 allows students to present their research to date and share this with their peers, building confidence and presentation skills. The Semester 02 Critical Study submission allows for students to decide to submit as an essay or as a video. The video essays I viewed this year were all of a high standard and the students I spoke to appreciated having this choice. This overall triangulation of studio practice, critical thinking and professional practice supports students in becoming holistic practitioners with a wide range of knowledge and skills within graphic design and creative practices.

A particular strength this year as we emerge fully from Covid is the wide range of live project briefs, as these provide great opportunities for students to work as a part of a team, to collaborate, and to work with deadlines, and manage professional relationships. IMA and St. Chads Cricket Club demonstrate ongoing successful student collaboration, building professional relationships with clients. The Level 06 students I spoke to really enjoyed the IMA Project and the collaborative and internship opportunities associated with it. The St. Chad's Cricket Club design proposal is very thorough, carefully considered and exciting as the students enter the final stages of realisation. Other live projects also offered exciting professional practice opportunities in other areas, for example, Allerton primary school, and Eat Cheap collaboration with Performance students. What is important in Level 06 is the wide of projects available to students, from live project briefs, competition briefs, self-directed, so they can select and focus on their own particular areas of interest. This is very clear in the project outcomes this year where some students really enjoy and excel in the digital realm, to other students who really embrace print or editorial design. This exciting broad range is testament to the staff in working with and building confidence in the students to really embrace their own particular strengths.

A wide range of digital skills are also evidenced in the work this year. These strong outcomes are in line with access to Adobe at Home software and LinkedIn Learning, it is critical that these industry standard software are maintained and provided to all Graphic Design students, as without this access to industry software, in the current economic climate, students will become disadvantaged.

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

9

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)

The BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme is structured to successfully set students up for employment or further study. The new curriculum is vibrant and exciting, producing graduates that are skilled and equipped to excel in the graphic design industry. The cohesive programme structure allows students to explore and experiment while building their graphic design awareness, knowledge and skills throughout Level 04 and Level 05 and bring everything together in a culmination of outcomes in Level 06. The series of professional practice talks at the beginning of Semester 02 is very important for the students and many of the students commented how beneficial these were for them. Many of the Level 06 students that I have spoken to over the last 4 years commented that they feel ready and are excited about their career in graphic design industry.

In Level 06, in particular, 6.2 module External Opportunities & Professional Practice provides a rich professional practice learning space for students. It enables them to build their portfolio / website; research design studios / designers aligned with their own practice and career intentions in Mapping Matters; and promote themselves through the Hello project. As stated previously, all the live projects, which there were many of this year are a great opportunity for developing and enhancing professional practice skills, and developing industry contacts. Opportunities for internships and placements were also great to see this year. Additionally, the integration of studio practice, research and critical thinking also sets students up in a position to pursue further study through Postgraduate opportunities.

It is also important that the course is supported to deliver on their graduate employability goals. As stated, access to Adobe at Home and LinkedIn Learning is essential for student progression to professional employment. These are industry standard software and must be included as fundamental to core learning for Graphic Design students in preparation for employment. The student feedback to me stated that many of the Level 06 students have their own laptop, so it is necessary they can access Adobe software on their own devices. Importantly, this access enables

students to work on their projects from home in out of hours, for example in the evenings or weekends. Other factors include if students are ill and unable to travel, they can still continue to work and as one student highlighted to me, the current ongoing rail strikes impacts on students being able to get on campus. This is why Adobe at Home is essential for student learning as it allows for certainty and inclusive access in an unpredictable external environment.

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:

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).

N/A

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:

This year, I was fortunate to visit on campus in January 2023 and again in June 2023. In both of these visits, I was provided with access to student work and all the necessary documents and assessment grades in an organised and efficient manner. The work I viewed was a sample of work across BA (Hons) Graphic Design Level 05 and Level 06, and also a selection of Level 04 work. I can confidently state that assessment procedures across Level 05 and Level 06 are rigorous and fair. I was able to view a selection of work and assessments across all of the grading bands. I am satisfied that the standards are aligned to the academic thresholds for the award and are comparable to peer work on equivalent courses in other institutions.

Module Handbooks, project briefs and course information are all very clear and accessible to students. Importantly, they are written in a student friendly language. Feedback is timely, and it is also very considered and enabling for students. Importantly, on the feedback forms, it is very clear to students where the assessment criteria is mapped to the module learning outcomes. One area that can be considered are the words / descriptors used in the assessment rubrics. For example, satisfactory / adequate can be interpreted as similar.

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

Yes

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:

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:

Section E

Collaborative Provision

Please indicate if you have been satisfied with the following:

E) Do you examine collaborative provision?

No

Section F

Degree Apprenticeships

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

No

Open comments

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.

N/A

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.

Final Comments

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

See below

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.

During my four year tenure as External Examiner, I have seen the transition from BA (Hons) Graphic Arts to the now BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme and despite the challenges of Covid, this has been very successful.

Each year I was able to see a selection of Level 04 work and it is great to see the range of projects they are undertaking and the exciting outcomes. Level 04 is such an important year as this is where big transitions to learning in HE are achieved. Level 05 builds on the skills developed in Level 04 and prepares students in studio practice and critical thinking for Level 06. Here too, the students are at a critical point where they have the confidence of Level 04 and they are continually increasing their knowledge and awareness of subject area. In Level 06, 6.1, the structure and the introduction of summative assessment point at the end of Semester 01 is a strong motivator for students. As mentioned previously, in 6.2, introducing the live project brief in Semester 01 is also a strong motivator for student engagement and provides a balanced workload across the modules.

Level 06 enables students to consolidate their studio practice linked with critical thinking and professional practice and prepares them for professional working environment and further postgraduate study opportunities. I have attended the End of Year Show in June 2022 and June 2023, and each year I am really impressed by the work on display. Outcomes embrace a wide use of media and processes, from analogue to digital, from book design to app design – this is what makes the programme, and positions it in a unique position that nurtures individuality in creative practices. Each year from speaking with Level 06 students, they feel ready and importantly equipped to embrace the opportunities post graduation, this is a strength of the new programme. The students have developed very bespoke design, digital and creative skills, but also key transferrable skills, and importantly a global outlook.

Student achievements from the programme post-graduation are to be commended with alumni working in design studios right across the UK and others continuing to postgraduate study. Some alumni return to present on their work and achievements to Level 06 students which is a testament to the strong relationships the programme team build with students over the years.

This year the Programme Leader hosted the annual International Society of Typographic Designers (ISTD) UK student assessment awards, this is

a fantastic opportunity for the Graphic Design Programme and having students successfully attain membership of ISTD.

While we are currently, thankfully in a post-covid environment, we have to be mindful of the impact the pandemic has had on young people and how that will manifest over the coming years. While learning and teaching structures continue to be revised and tweaked, pastoral care and student wellbeing are a very important aspect of the learning environment. It is not to be underestimated the time and care provided by staff in all levels to ensure students feel supported right throughout. There is currently a very strong programme team in place, it is essential that the programme is continued to be resourced as it is important that a healthy staff / student ratio is maintained.

The current programme space is good and overall the students have access to excellent facilities (letterpress, risoprinting, bookbinding etc.) it is important that studio space is maintained and adjusted to accommodate increasing numbers. Other resources including availability of iMacs / computers on campus must continue to be resourced. Each year in my report, I highlight CAGD, the course VLE as a distinctive and innovative asset to the programme and the wider school, this must continue to be acknowledged and supported. As stated previously, it is critical that access to Adobe software and LinkedIn Learning is kept. Without this access to industry standard software, in the current economic climate, it will disadvantage students. Students currently, and will continue to face many challenges throughout their learning journey, one of these is financial. As a widening participation institution, providing and supporting students with access to industry standard software must continue to be implemented.

Overall, it has been a pleasure to be part of the journey of the new BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme over the last four years. I would like to thank the programme leader, graphic design team and administration staff for their warm welcome and professionalism. It is an exciting and vibrant programme with a strong staff team that continue to develop and nurture individual student creativity, enabling them to achieve their full potential. I wish the programme all they very best as it will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Email Address (required)

Date (required)

Page 9 of 9