

## MA Interdisciplinary Psychology 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."		
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 course curriculum is innovative and distinctive

The written feedback is extensive and in some cases exemplary

The extensive choice within the assessment allows students to tailor their interests within modules

The dissertations gave students the chance to explore an in-depth topic and some were fascinating accounts skilfully argued and presented.

## 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.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A *</b>
<i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i>			<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).
Effective and fair

(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.)
The course team gave detailed consideration to all the comments and suggestions I made, responding in a prompt and thoughtful manner. Some have been taken up for review in future iterations

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.
The student's performance is in line with that found at other institutions. In some instances, students are performing at a very high level given the complexity of the material they are engaged with. There is also a weaker tail in performance, but overall most students are showing good engagement with the material and achieving to a satisfactory level.

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.
The students have the opportunity to develop knowledge across and range of psychological perspectives. Their strengths lie in being able to grasp distinctive and sometimes contradictory theoretical frameworks and concepts and/or make some attempt at a synthesis of ideas from different theoretical fields. The

weakness for those unable to do this is falling back on lower level skills such as description and basic comparison. I noted that some assessment task leaned themselves to lower level skills such as compare and contrast and students perform well here. Tasks that asked higher order skills such as apply concepts to new settings were performed less well, but arguably were selected by weaker students.

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

The course is exceptionally well organised with a clear narrative for the ordering of modules. The feedback provided to students is attentive and detailed. One area for improvement that has been suggested is in comparing the assessment tasks and essay questions across the modules to ensure they are set at a similar level – and allow both strong and weaker students to achieve. It would also be helpful to have some formal record of any oral assessments as not possible to comment on without.

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

No concerns with this given the comments above.

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

I found this straightforward to use and didn't note any problems in use by the students.

**(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.)**

As provided in previous feedback it would be worth the team spending some time looking across the assessment demands of each module to ensure parity as well within a module.

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

The course enables engagement across a rich range of areas.

**(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**

<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?	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?			
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?			

<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?			
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?			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?	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 one		
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		