

BA (Hons) Psychology and Society 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.

To reiterate my comments from the previous reports, this is an outstanding course which offers a diverse range of relevant psychology-based modules in areas of psychology that are of interest yet are not part of the BPS Accredited Route.

The course is impeccably well-run with a committed course team. There is professional dialogue throughout the year through various channels which ensures that the course is continually student-focused.

Staff have a great range of experience and are internationally recognised for their contributions to research. Consequently the level of the modules is relevant and engaging as evidenced through the student work. As I have previously commented, the passion for psychology comes through in students' assessed work, even at the lower end of the grade profile.

The module guidance provides an enhanced level of support for students, specifically with the requirements to complete assessment items. In addition, the tutor feedback on work guides students in strengthening their work, their academic skills, their subject knowledge, yet also encourages reflection.

The course is innovative in nature and should look at expanding given that a number of other universities are seeking to develop similar combined courses with psychology (e.g. psychology and the arts at University of Worcester).

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 *
	✓		
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.			

(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).
The Progression and Award Board were extremely well run. All documentation was provided in a timely manner and the actual board progressed effectively and efficiently. There were no concerns raised and there was sufficient time to discuss relevant issues.

(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 two actions raised from the 2016-2017 report were actioned: this was a team discussion to standardise feedback along with examining the viability of a distance-learning provision. Dr. Natalia Gerodetti has replace Dr. Tom Godwin as the course leader.

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.
Student overall performance is comparable with other students at equitable levels in other institutions. Not only is the work of a comparable standard, the justification for the grades strongly supports the process. As such, the student outcomes equitable to other HEIs' samples for which I have been, or work an external.

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

From my previous reports, I have noted that student outcome is dependent upon their output. Higher graded students demonstrate their engagement with course materials, while also extending their research beyond provided materials. Students' level of engagement with content and in general, academic study, explains the variation in grade. Stronger student work similarly demonstrates higher level academic skills of synthesis and analysis to construct a line of reasoning through the assessment, while weaker student work lacks such skills and is merely descriptive with lack of analysis, or with limited sources to support.

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

The standards are consistently high throughout the course in relation to the assessment process. This is evidenced through the guidance provided, the range of assessment items, the choice students have for engaging with assessment, the marking and moderation procedures, the annotation of scripts, student feedback, and so forth.

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

From my previous reports, and as similarly demonstrated this year, the curriculum and teaching of the programme has remained significantly high throughout my tenure as external examiner. The course is driven by subject experts who are able to develop undergraduate module content which is relevant and engaging. The range of theories are current and research-informed.

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

My Beckett is a superb resource. It is easy to navigate to find the relevant modules and student work, also easy to see the marking and grades across the cohort. As long as the log-on details are stored, there are no issues with forgotten passwords as this is easy to process.

(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.)

I have had the opportunity to review the relevant course modules this year. In relation to the module outlines, these are explicit and provide the student with a detailed overview of the nature and scope of the module. It is useful to see that the full grading system is being utilised. The comments justify the grades awarded to the work. The distribution curve of marks may be slightly skewed towards the higher end, this is due to the engagement of the students with the content and the support of the course team.

Full use of the Grademark software is used, specifically providing formative comments on student scripts to contextualise the grade. The comments on each assignment effectively contextualises the justification for the grade in relation to the learning outcomes and the grade criteria, although it would be useful to

contextualise the strengths for the comments that say 'good' or 'very good'. Explain to the student what they have done.

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

Students engage extremely well with the variety of modules on the course. Scrutiny of course documents and teaching materials are of a very high standard throughout. These are informed through the professional expertise of the team: indeed, I am aware that many of the team are very well published and I would advocate any support I can provide for their promotions in due course.

As noted, I am aware of other HEIs that are now looking at developing courses such as this. For this reason, I would encourage the course team to develop a distance-learning provision if applicable. For example, I am aware at University of Worcester, there is interest of developing a psychology and the arts degree programme.

(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?	✓		