

BSc (Hons) 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."	x	
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 elements that really stood out as good practice are: the very thorough moderation procedures across all modules, the innovative methods of assessment, in particular the podcast assignment (Critical Psychology in Practice) and the presentation and artefact assessment (Psychology & Appearance). These assessments are excellent and the team should be commended for this.

The use of a third marker for the final year projects where the original two markers cannot agree is a sensible approach, and is evidence of good practice.

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 *
	x		
<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 board I attended was conducted in a professional and collegial manner, with an excellent staff attendance, illustrating staff commitment to their students. The chair was excellent and ran the meeting efficiently, and the administrative support was outstanding. Staff were knowledgeable in discussions about their modules and their students.</p> <p>This was my first board after being appointed in march this year, and I was made to feel very welcome.</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.)
<p>N/A This is my first time examining.</p>

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.
<p>Students performed well, and a good percentage received first or upper class degree classifications. Results are comparable to other institutions. I have been impressed with the good range of marks for the assessments I have looked at. The best students are stretched and show very good levels of critical analysis and detail. I commend the programme team on designing assessments that cleverly require students to integrate theoretical understanding with application to practice in a thoughtful way.</p>

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

The programme is appropriately challenging for students across levels 4 to 6, and assessments discriminate between the higher, mid and lower ability students. The programme embeds psychological theoretical knowledge and practical skills into the curriculum, and students demonstrate a good level of theory and methods, and the stronger students show a good level of critical evaluation. There is a strong emphasis on how these principles and skills can be applied in the real world.

Weaknesses appear to be related to student attendance at lectures and/or seminars.

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

Standards across these areas are extremely high, with excellent assessment design, useful feedback comments and thorough moderation procedures. The team should be commended on the organisation, design and running of the programme.

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

The curriculum is interesting, comprehensive and contemporary. I imagine that this is a very attractive degree course for potential students given the range of topics included in the programme. I was impressed with the range of elective modules available for students, as well as the breadth and depth of the research methods teaching across all levels. The staff team are responsive to student feedback and demonstrate a high degree of commitment to their students.

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

I received helpful guidance on using My Beckett from the administrative team and from module leaders, so I found using the VLE relatively hassle free.

(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 was very impressed by the content of the modules I examined; they are innovative, interesting and contemporary and manage to keep up with the fast moving discipline of psychology. As stated previously, the assessments are innovative and well designed to keep students engaged while differentiating between abilities. The module handbooks contain all of the important information for students to access, and learning outcomes are clearly measured by module assessments.

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

It is clear that staff are engaged with above areas, and this is demonstrated by the high quality curriculum, marking and moderating procedures, and research led teaching.

(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)?	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		

Draft examination papers				
		Yes	No	N/A
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?			
	(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?			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		
Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:				
<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?	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		
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		