

FdSc Casting Technology 2015/16

External Examiner's report summary

Please indicate in the relevant boxes below whether you agree with the statements about the standards of Leeds Beckett University's awards, the standards of student performance and the conduct of the University's assessment processes.

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 the Faculty or nominee will be alerted and will oversee the response from the course leader.

Standards set		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the standards set for the 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 performance			
	Yes	No	N/A *
"In my view, the standards of student performance are comparable with similar course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar."	√		
I have reviewed a sample of student work from the collaborative / franchise institution and in my view the standards of student performance are comparable with students studying the award(s) at Leeds Beckett.			
* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess national standards 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 sound 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 for commendation

Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes

Blended learning programmes have significant challenges and benefits in regards to teaching and learning. The programmes are supported well by staff. A particular strength in relation to standards and assessment processes is the detail and style of feedback given to students as evidenced on the sample documents within the VLE system. Students continue to demonstrate a high level of attainment and range of knowledge. The structure of assignment and examination marking is excellent in terms of alignment to learning outcomes and hence demonstrable evidence to standards.

These courses are due to finish during the next academic year. This is especially challenging and complex in the context of blended learning student cohorts. The conduct of the Examination Board was Chaired very professionally both upholding the University regulations whilst being pragmatic towards the needs of these particular students. In addition this high-level of professional approach was demonstrated by the academic leader and the administrator of these courses.

Main report

In this section you are asked to describe more fully how the University has or has not maintained academic standards and the quality of the student experience in relation to the course(s) for which you are the external examiner.

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 / franchise provision sampled.

If you are an external examiner for any of the University's Pearson Edexcel (HND/HNC level) provision, please also complete the section on page 8 sections l, m and n entitled "for External Examiners Associated with Edexcel Courses."

Professional Body Requirements			
<p>"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met.</p> <p><i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i></p>	Yes	No	N/A *
	√		
<p><i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i></p>			

(a) The operation and conduct of the Board of Examiners (and or Examination Committee meeting you may also have attended).

The Board and Examiners and the Examination Committee (attended earlier in the year) were both conducted in an appropriate manor. As stated in the Commendation Section the recent Board of Examiners was professionally Chaired and administrated. A high level of attention to detail and pragmatism to the student cohorts were displayed in view of these programmes ending during the next academic year. Due consideration was given to all students with empathy whilst upholding the University regulations.

(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.)

No required actions from last year.

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.

Students generally perform well in relation to comparable levels of work from other institutions. They achieve significantly good standards of work and demonstrate a reflective ethos particularly within report writing. The student performance and knowledge demonstrated within the BEng(Hons) Metallurgy and Materials course is very good in terms of breadth and depth. The two foundation degree courses (Casting Technology;

Metallurgy and Materials) also demonstrate a very good performance level and reflective study.

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

In regards to professional practice within the industrial context the students demonstrate a detailed knowledge and ability to describe complex processes and applications. The students demonstrate a mature and reflective approach to their education. The assignments and examination procedures help to strengthen and guide students through an educational methodology that includes a close alignment to learning outcomes. The academic and theoretical aspects are challenging to students but this is mitigated by clear communication, encouragement to research, and utilise published material as references.

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

Good practice is demonstrated in terms of educational standards within the forms of assessment evidenced within reports and formal examination papers. Clear and demonstrable structures exist that provide evidence of student attainment aligned to learning outcomes. Students are required to pass each element within assignments that are referenced to learning outcomes, evidences this good practice. Generally assessments are clear and provide comprehensive instructions to students that encourage a sense of self-motivation. Tutors generally utilise learning technology within assessment marking and provide clear and detailed feedback as an overview and within the report body.

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

These courses will be ending in the next academic year and therefore the cohort of these blended-learning students is reducing in size. However student achievement continues to demonstrate a high standard of attainment. Students are supported well through academic staff contact and use of the VLE system. Resourcing is appropriate to these students who have additional requirements and challenges from industrial/employment responsibilities. Academic staff support students directly and through industrial mentors to ensure time resources are maintained despite commercial pressures.

(g) Comments on the use of X-stream (Virtual Learning Environment) within the course (if applicable).

The blended-learning students continue to fully utilise the VLE Moodle system. Academic staff support student learning well with clear evidence of engagement e.g. detailed assessment feedback. The efficient use by students and staff of the VLE is essential for blended learning courses such as these. Although these courses are due to finish soon the remaining academic staff continue to have a very positive attitude to learning technology and continuous personal development in this area.

(h) Module content, consistency of modules and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes. (You may be asked by your Faculty to provide detailed comments on the modules that you examine.)

The module content across the three courses is entirely appropriate to the Foundation and Honours degrees. Students are expected to understand a significant range of knowledge related to the academic and professional practice areas of subjects. An example is the BEng Metallurgy and Materials course that contains the Mechanical Treatment of Metals unit. Here the students need to understand the specific technical effects (stress, structure and tribology) learning outcomes within the assignment and place this knowledge within a practice environment.

(i) Areas of good practice you have identified – please expand on the key areas for commendation listed in the summary.

Referencing the structure of assignments around learning objectives helps students to attain the standards required for awards at Foundation and honours degrees. This is presented to students very clearly with thorough explanations. The self-assessment activities within continuous assessments help reinforce reflective practice and understanding of subject content in relation to the learning outcomes.

(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.

No comment at this stage

(k) **Collaborative / Franchise Provision:** please include here any comments you wish to make on elements of collaborative / franchise provision for which you have responsibility (in addition to those you may have indicated previously in this report).

No additional comments

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 / franchise 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 / franchise 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?	√		

Examination Committee/Board of Examiners				
		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 Examination Committee/Board of Examiners?	√		