

# BAH Contemporary Surface Design and Textiles 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 Metropolitan 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		
"In my view, the standards set for the awards are appropriate."	Yes	No
	YES	
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.		

Student performance			
"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."	Yes	No	N/A *
	Yes		
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 Met			
* 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		
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted."	Yes	No
	Yes	
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

## 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 write a report (in addition to completing the Summary) in sections under all the following areas. Where applicable please also reference the sections to any collaborative / franchise provision you have sampled.**

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

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

Whilst I did not attend the Examination Board I was able to review fully the documentation prior to this and have been suitably impressed with the extensive preparations for external examining processes. I confirm that the marks and grades awarded are commensurate with Degree level study.

(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 following points were raised in the last External Examiner Report –

To widen the use of Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator throughout the programme – further staff development of the current staff base is required to undertake this fully.

Review the feasibility of students specialising earlier in the programme – this is being reviewed through module content and organisation.

To roll out the newly devised assessment feedback sheet used at L4 to L5 and L6 – this has been acknowledged and is being implemented into the new programme.

The management of the digital print facility and print room operations through adequate staffing is required to ensure that facilities are maintained for students use. This is predominantly a staffing issue, rather than course level.

Library stock and access would also benefit from some consideration at a management level to ensure that it is available and adequately resourced for students, especially those who are moving into their final year of study – this in part seems to have been resolved with students reporting better access to the Library and other collections.

Whilst students were appreciative of the level of tutorial and academic support given to them by staff, they continued to be concerned about the level of staffing given the recent staff vacancies.

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

I would agree that the work produced by students on this programme is comparable with work from other institutions. Staff should be commended on their efforts this year to create a professional outward facing final year show which highlighted the extensive practices which students are able to explore.

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

The opportunity for students to work with experienced staff who are also exhibiting, making and selling work is a key strength to the programme, and as such there is scope to further enhance the course. The making and embroidery aspects are current and allow students to explore contemporary practice for gallery outcomes, alongside an awareness of commercial design practices, feeding into students final major projects.

Students produce in-depth technical folders and as such are able to develop an understanding of technical processes which are relevant to their industry. Students benefit from undertaking extensive sampling and researching and recording processes thoroughly within these files for further development through specialist projects in their final year.

Students are able to develop a deep understanding of practice based processes and explore their practice through the production of a range of relevant samples. Through the final project they evidence their understanding of this through the production of relevant designer/artist statements which articulate their practice. There is evidence of thoughtful enquiry and critical engagement. The conceptual knowledge is also highlighted through the standard of final year dissertations.

The student learning experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage with live project briefs, enabling them to gain an understanding of current practice. These include opportunities to respond to design competitions and work to external briefs, these elements should be commended. Detailed project briefs enable students to gain knowledge surrounding the subject area, and support the learning activities.

The projects are updated year on year, and this year the Trend project was particularly exciting for students to answer.

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

The management of the External Examiner visit was well organised with mark sheets available to view and all work arranged within studios and workshop areas. The dissertation and other paperwork arrived in good time. Thorough written feedback sheets were also available to review alongside the evidence of moderation. Thorough written feedback sheets were also available to view with newly developed succinct feedback forms in operation.

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

Whilst students were appreciative of the level of tutorial and academic support given to them by staff, they continued to be concerned about the level of staffing given the recent staff vacancies. There are key issues with staffing which require addressing in order to ensure that the student learning experience is maintained, in particular technical support staff in both woven and printed textiles.

Continued review of investment in consumables by the department responsible for digital printing resource is required in order to avoid any difficulties in managing students outputs.

Access to the Library facilities has greatly improved this year, and students were appreciative of the level of improvement with this. Students would do well to access online trend journals.

Students were complimentary about the contact time and feedback from staff; and the written summative feedback confirms this.

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

(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.)

Students are offered the opportunity to explore a wide range of approaches to contemporary design and making practices through relevant design briefs through both studio practice and techniques based modules.

The development of key skills for employability as covered through Design Your Futures module, including CV preparation, is an area of good practice. The content of the Design Your Futures module offers key employability skills and an opportunity for students to understand the wider context that they are working in. This helps to direct students to their final exhibition and opportunities offered through the graduate showcase exhibition at New Designers in London.

Continued development of personal levels of enquiry in the form of sketchbook visual research methods and the production of worksheets would offer students the opportunity to build key transferable and fundamental skills necessary as a precursor to design.

Within student sketchbooks there was evidence of sound contextualisation, and within technical note files students produce extensive sampling and benefit from the exploration of processes. This is a very good area of practice.

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

The areas of good practice continue in the following areas –

- Consistency in the marking and assessment of students across modules.
- Coordinated summative feedback sheets to students.
- Professional student outcomes which reflect an underpinning knowledge of techniques and processes across a variety of discipline areas.
- Live projects which enable the students to understand commercial constraints, and the processes involved in responding to client requirements.
- A dedicated staff team who continue to support students towards graduation through tutorial advise.
- Approachable key technical staff who offer practical support to students.
- Evidence of sound contextualisation within technical note files and extensive sampling of processes.
- The dissertation module continues to enable students to explore a range of relevant topic areas for study.
- A good level of academic and professional achievement for students as evidenced at the final year Degree Show exhibition and at the New Designers exhibition in London.

(j) The University welcomes external examiners' comments on its developing 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.

There are no specific matters to take forward at this time.

(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).

**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)?	yes		
b.	Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate (these may be included the Course Handbook)?	yes		
c.	Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)?	yes		
d.	Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	yes		

<b>Draft examination papers</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft papers?			n/a
	(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?			

<b>Draft coursework</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft coursework?			n/a
	(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><b>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Metropolitan University are as follows:</b></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?	yes		
b.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?	yes		

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?	yes		
b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	yes		

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?			n/a

Examination Committee/Board of Examiners				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you able to attend the meetings?		no	
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?			
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Examination Committee/Board of Examiners?			