

BAH Musical Theatre 2014/15

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

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			
"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 *
			✓
<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 Board of Examiners (and any Mitigation Panel or Examination Committee meeting you may also have attended).

The operation of the Board of Examiners were in accordance with University regulations and the Board was conducted effectively

(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 specific action was required

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

The overall performance of the students was comparable to levels of work in other institutions

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

The strengths of the students on this course, in the main, lie in their performance skills, abilities and techniques. It is very encouraging to see how the development

of skills at levels 4 and 5 are carried through to full-scale production work, and the graduate showcase in level 6. Many students find the development of cognitive skills and their application in written assignments and, at level 6, the dissertation more challenging. Again, this issue is common in courses such as this. The staff team give very good support to students in developing both their conceptual understanding and written work.

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

The staff team is extremely diligent in the way it conducts all aspects of assessment. They are very thorough with moderation and ensuring that assessments are objective and fair. I have a concern about certain assessment conditions in that there was evidence of viva voce assessments being conducted in rooms where there was clear noise pollution from adjoining spaces. This is due to the nature of the accommodation, but is perhaps something that could be looked at for the future.

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

This course provides an exciting, vigorous and challenging curriculum for students aspiring to be musical theatre performers. One of its success indicators is that, by the end of level 6, students have a very clear understanding of the industry and their potential future within it. Ultimately this is very important for students on this course. The journey through the three years of the programme, provided by the modules and the team that deliver them, is well modelled and appropriate for this kind of training. The standard of teaching on the course is, in my opinion, high. There have been improvements in this regard throughout my time as the external examiner.

One factor of note occurs at level 6: in the dissertation component of the Negotiated Research Project module the highest marks are consistently gained by students taking the written dissertation option (as opposed to the Performed Presentation). This kind of option is usual within these level 6 modules, and it is often the case that students perceive the 'non-written' option as the 'easier' pathway. Perhaps there is food for thought here about guidance for students as to their choice of delivery.

(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.)

This course, as with other similar courses, is aiming to provide an holistic educational experience within the constraints of a modular system of delivery. The course overcomes these constraints successfully, and part of the reason for this is the connectivity and resonance that exists between the various modules that make up the programme. There is a good level of what is known as ‘constructive alignment’ via the syllabus content, teaching and learning activities through to successful achievement of learning outcomes on the part of the students. Perhaps the team could look at strengthening this alignment still further and tightening up the linkage between these different components.

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

The support given to students remains one of the great strengths of this course. Like all courses there is a need to strive for excellence in teaching, assessment and feedback. Moreover with this type of course, all this is done within the context of performance work. The nature of this kind of work means that the inter-personal relationships between staff and students, and students and students, needs to be very positive. This continues to be the case at The Manchester College and the success of the course is very much the result of the tremendous support the staff team gives to their students.

(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.

(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

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?	✓		