



University of East Anglia

PARTNERSHIPS OFFICE

ANNUAL EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

Name of institution examined: INTO UEA

Faculty/School n/a

Course Title(s) English Modules for: Business & Humanities Foundation, Science Foundation & Graduate Dip

Academic Year: 2018-19

External Examiner Name: Chris Veysey

External Examiner's home University / College or Other Professional / Institutional Affiliation: University of Salford

NB – External Examiner reports are widely circulated, therefore students and staff should not be individually identified. Course Teams will respond to the recommendations made by the External Examiner in the boxes provided. The response should be counter signed by the Head of HE or equivalent within ten working days.

An electronic copy of this report should be emailed to the Head of HE (or equivalent) at the partner institution, to arrive no later than one month after the main assessment board meeting. You will receive a copy of the report with the Course Team's response completed.

Sufficient Evidence Checklist

Please can you confirm the following:

Programme materials

Did you receive:	Y	N	N/A
a. Programme handbook(s)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Programme regulations (these may be in the programme handbook)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Draft examination papers

- 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?

Marking examination scripts

- a. (i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?
- (ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?
- b. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?
- c. Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?

Dissertations/project reports

- a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?
- b. Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Coursework/continuously assessed work

- a. Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?
- b. Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

- a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?

Final examiners' meeting

- a. Were you able to attend the meeting?
- b. Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?
- c. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?

Maintaining Threshold Academic Standards

Please provide feedback on whether:

The programme and its component parts are coherent with learning outcomes aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor and subject benchmark statements where applicable

- No subject benchmarks apply at Level 3.
- The coursework, assessments and learning outcomes are all aligned well.
- The degree to which learning outcomes can be 'constructively aligned' (i.e. mapped onto specific skills that students will need on their courses) is limited to some extent by the large number of subject disciplines onto which students can progress, but given this constraint, the alignment is sound.

The programme reflects appropriate PSRB requirements where applicable

- The programme is well-run and well-organised. Although most of the areas applicable to the relevant PSRB (the British Council) requirements fall outside the scope of my remit, where they do fall within it, I believe that the PSRB requirements are easily met.

Assessments in modules of the same level are of a comparable standard to those in other UK HEIs

- The assessment level is of a comparable standard.

The curriculum is current

- The curriculum is current and, in some areas, ahead of the curve (notably the incorporation of discipline-specific elements into the Science Foundation programme and the reflective assessment in the Business and Humanities Foundation programme).

Assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are set at the appropriate level

- These are set at a comparable level to other institutions offering English Language modules on foundation and pre-master's/grad dip courses.

Measuring Achievement, Rigour and Fairness

Please provide feedback on whether:

The types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students, the level of study and the expected outcomes

- The assessments are appropriate to subjects, students and level.
- Variety in different types of appropriate assessments is an area of strength (see good practice below).

The marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied, and internal marking is of an appropriate standard, fair and reliable

The assessment processes are carried out in accordance with the institution's regulations and procedures

- I confirm that this is the case.

Procedures governing mitigating/extenuating circumstances, academic integrity/misconduct and borderline performances have been considered fairly and equitably applying institutional regulations

- I only come into contact with such procedures during the exam boards themselves, but in all cases where I have seen them in operation, they have been fairly and equitably applied.

Comparability of Standards and Student Performance

Reflecting on your experience at other institutions please provide feedback on:

The comparability of standards and student achievement:

- **across the modules within a single programme**
- **across programmes within a single subject area in an awarding institution**
- **across programmes within a single subject area across institutions of which you have experience**
- **any of the above, across cohorts during your period of appointment**

- Standards and achievement are broadly comparable to those at similar programmes in other UK HEIs.

- There are consistently differences in the achievement and incoming ability levels of students across the three cohorts that I examine. The highest level of incoming ability and of final achievement is consistently found in the Science Foundation cohort, and the lowest level in the Graduate Diploma cohort. I do not believe that these differences are a result of differing programme qualities, but rather, the result of differences in the average ability levels of students in the different markets from which these programmes recruit.

Enhancement of Quality

Please provide comment and recommendations on:

Good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment you have observed

Areas of Good Practice across all Programmes

- There is consistently good evidence of moderation.
- Appropriacy and accessibility of texts good across three programmes.
- There is a very good range of task types in Listening and Reading assessments. This makes the assessments fairer and robust.

- The appropriate criteria are consistently highlighted on the marking rubrics given back to students, making it easy for students to understand why they've received the marks they have and how to improve.

Foundation: Humanities & Business

- On one assessment, all papers were remarked when an inconsistency was found. This thoroughness should be reassuring to students and to UEA alike.
- An agreed, evolving answer key is maintained for assessments where this is appropriate. This ensures fairness and consistency for all students.
- The end-of-term speaking test is very strong. It mimics many of the skills needed for classroom discussion, which is often the most problematic aspect of speaking for students. The preparation sheet is very helpful and likely to reduce the risk of poor performance due to lack of understanding of the task. The final, reflective task is particularly good.

Foundation: Science

- The marking criteria designed for the poster presentation do a particularly good job of authentically reflecting the specific skills that students will need on their courses.
- With regard to writing assessments, the process by which students receive feedback through multiple iterations is very good, as it allows students ample opportunity to turn feedback into learning. In a similar vein, the feed-forward from poster presentation to final project is an area of particularly good practice.

Graduate Diploma

- A very high degree of marking accuracy was achieved, and it is clear to see that good moderation practices contributed significantly to this high degree of accuracy.
- Requiring students to incorporate sources into their writing assessment significantly increases authenticity and constructive alignment.

Opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students

Foundation: Humanities & Business

- The assessments are often more IELTS-like than comparable assessments in the Graduate Diploma and FSE. This has the benefit of transparency between IELTS and Foundation English scores, but a slightly more authentic academic approach may benefit students more, as it will map more closely onto the skills needed post-Foundation.
- Listening and reading marks were high. There is no particular reason to worry about this happening with a single cohort. However, if—across years—listening and reading marks are consistently much higher than overall marks, then appropriate action should be taken (e.g. the marks on these assessments could be calibrated down or the revised to improve writing and speaking grades).

Graduate Diploma

- This was clearly a weaker cohort than usual for the Graduate Diploma, so it is unclear to what extent lessons can be learned from them and applied to more typical cohorts. Nonetheless, it is noticeable that there was considerably better improvement in writing than in reading and listening skills. This may indicate that students are learning better in class (where the most gain in writing skills tends to occur) than in independent study (where the most gain in passive skills tends to occur). It may thus be worth exploring a more heavily monitored approach to independent study/homework.

The difficulty level for one assessment (Listening) proved wrong. This is a normal occurrence with English Language assessments and was dealt with appropriately.

However, it would be useful to take this as an opportunity to formalise as a policy on exactly how grades are moderated up or down when this occurs. To avoid subjectivity, it would be good to incorporate into this policy some measure of expected gain (expected IELTS gain from Applied Linguistics research literature, teacher estimations of learning gain, formative performance, etc.). The aim should be to get a formalised, principled approach like that followed in FSE (though there is no particular need to follow same approach of using a formula).

Also, please:

State whether you received sufficient evidence to enable your role to be fulfilled. If not, please provide details

- I confirm that I have sufficient evidence to be able to fulfil my role fully.

State whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to your satisfaction

- INTO UEA has consistently engaged with me on issues raised and has always addressed them to my satisfaction.

Use this space to address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body

- n/a

Give an overview of your term of office if this is your final year

- n/a

RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Please list your recommendations for action by the course team:

External Examiner's Recommendations for action <i>(to be completed by External Examiner)</i>	Course Team's Response (action to be taken and measurable outcomes) <i>(to be completed by Course Leader)</i>	By whom <i>(to be completed by Course Leader)</i>	By when <i>(to be completed by Course Leader)</i>
<p>For the Graduate Diploma, formalise an explicit policy on the adjustment of grades in cases where the difficulty level of a particular assessment proves too high or low.</p>	<p>We are currently discussing this with this year's intakes in mind.</p>	<p>Coordinators and Programme Manager.</p>	<p>April 2020.</p>
<p>For the Humanities & Business Foundation programme, examine results from previous years to ascertain if there is a consistent pattern of reading & listening grades being substantially higher than speaking & writing; if such a pattern is identified, take appropriate action.</p>	<p>Our records show that despite a slightly higher average mark over the last 6 cohorts (3 years) for reading and listening over writing and speaking, we regard this as simply reflecting the relative difficulty of the productive skills over receptive. Averages were as follows: Writing - 65.37% Speaking – 68.45% Reading – 69.52% Listening – 70.45%</p> <p>We will also continue to be scrupulous in our 'rounding' policy where marks fall between IELTS bands, typically between 60% and 65%</p>	<p>English Module leader & Programme Manager.</p>	<p>December 2019 (for Term 1 tests)</p>

Report completed by:

Signature



Date: 11/10/2019

COURSE TEAM'S GENERAL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Useful comments/feedback above which we appreciated on Foundation and which initiated effective checking of past results. Many thanks. (PT)

Some very useful feedback and advice here, as well as at the exam board. (SG)

Responses and Action Plan completed by:

Course Leader:

Date: 31.10.19

Paul Thompson

(Please print name and sign)

Countersigned by:

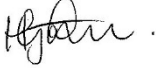
Head of HE (or
equivalent)

Date:


Jeremy Moyle

1/11/19

To be completed by the Partnerships Office:

A	No action identified	
B	Identified action and picked up appropriately	X
C	Identified action and not picked up appropriately or action not identified	
 H Jackson Assistant Head of Partnerships 12 November 2019		

To be completed by Academic Director of Partnerships

A	No action identified	
B	Identified action and picked up appropriately	X
C	Identified action and not picked up appropriately or action not identified	
 Professor Ian Dewing Academic Director of Partnerships 13 November 2019		