

ANNUAL EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

Name of Institution Examined: INTO UEA

Faculty/School: INTO

Course Title(s): INTO UEA Foundation Society and Culture,
Foundation International & Developmental
Studies, Foundation Law,
Graduate Diploma Contemporary World Issues,
Graduate Diploma International Political Economy,
Graduate Diploma Social & Cultural Studies and
Graduate Diploma Research Project (Social
Science related)

Academic Year: 2019/20

External Examiner Name: Dr Rico Isaacs

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

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)?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Programme regulations (these may be in the programme handbook)?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Draft examination papers

- 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? X
- (ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?
- c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments? X

Marking examination scripts

- a. (i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts? X
- (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? X
- c. Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks? X

Dissertations/project reports

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

Coursework/continuously assessed work

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

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

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

Final examiners' meeting

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

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

Both the Foundation and Graduate Diploma programmes are coherent and match the aligned learning outcomes which meet the relevant qualification subject benchmarks. It is clear module leaders work together across the pathways to ensure that modules relate and feed off each other giving students a coherent and integrated learning experience.

The programme reflects appropriate PSRB requirements where applicable

N/A

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

Yes, assessment in the modules are a comparable standard to those in other UK HEIs. A range of assessments are used from exams, essays, video presentations, research proposals and long-form research projects. What is occurring in terms of assessment is standard across the discipline and the higher education sector.

The curriculum is current

For both the Foundation and Graduate Diploma courses the curriculums are current and appropriate for the different subjects. The most relevant and important thinkers, ideas, debates and theories are generally addressed across the content of the different modules I looked at. This is particularly the case with topics such as terrorism, human rights and global inequalities and poverty. The main course texts used are up-to-date and appropriate for this level.

However, I would make a suggestion that in light of both Black Lives Matter, and the on-going decolonisation of academia discussions, that consideration could go into diversifying some of the thinkers and topics under study in the course. While I appreciate we are dealing with entry-level basics in the social sciences where often there is a specific 'canon' of thinkers (Weber, Marx, Durkheim) which are of course, white, male and Western, there might be scope to think about introducing more diverse voices where appropriate.

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

The assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are set at the appropriate level.

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 modules I reviewed at both levels use a range of assessments which are set at the appropriate level. While there are the more traditional forms of assessment such as essays and exams, the courses also offer a good range of variation including video presentations, research proposals and long-form research projects. As with other years I have reviewed these modules, the video presentations which form part of the Foundation Society and Culture module is an example of best practice. Similarly, the Social and Cultural Studies module in the Graduate Diploma programme has an innovative assessment where the students have to write an assignment on a documentary about social class in the UK. It is good for students to be engaging with different forms of texts in this way. Likewise, I have always liked the way the assessment for the Research Skills module is set up to support students' development of their research project, with each aspect of the assessment regime building on the last leading to the culmination of the longer form and more challenging research project.

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

In general, the marking scheme and grading criteria have been consistently applied across all the modules I moderated. The marking was within the appropriate grade ranges and was applied consistently across all modules. There was clear evidence of moderation throughout and the marking and moderation was fair and reliable. The feedback provided to students is good and detailed. There is also evidence of appropriate moderation and second marking.

I have one brief comment. It would be good to see more evidence of the discussion which takes place between the first and second marker where a mark is amended through the moderation process which then alters the grade boundary of the mark. There is always evidence of moderation, but a sentence or two which justifies the changing of mark through that process which changes the overall grade classification would be helpful to see.

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

I am satisfied on the basis of documentation and evidence provided that all assessment processes are carried out in accordance with UEA regulations and procedures.

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

I am satisfied that the procedures governing mitigating and extenuating circumstances and issues of academic integrity are considered fairly and consistently within the institutional regulations. At the exam boards I attended, borderline cases were considered thoughtfully and in detail and in conjunction with the institutional rules and regulations.

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**

Foundation

International Development Studies

The marking for this module was all in the appropriate range, was fair and consistent, there was a good level of feedback provided for students and good evidence of moderation. In general, student work was good, and the module featured a good balance of assessment. Where student marks were moderated downwards I concurred with the decision and outcome of the moderation process.

Foundation Law

The marking was in the appropriate range, was fair and consistent and good constructive feedback on the assignments as well as clear moderation of assessed work. However, there did not seem to be any evidence of moderation of exam papers, but this may have just been the sample I saw.

Society and Culture

There was a good spread of marks for this module. All marks awarded were in the appropriate grade range and the marking was fair and consistent across the board. I agreed with the moderation of marks downwards for those students who had copied most of the work from the PowerPoint slides in the exam. I was also impressed with the marker rationale for marks on each question via the notated exam scripts. The video assignment continues to be a very good assignment for students which seems to motivate good work and encourages creativity.

Graduate Diploma

Social and Cultural Studies

Marking was fair and consistent and in the appropriate range. The written assignment on the documentary *Posh and Posher* was an innovative assessment that allowed students to analyse a different text from the usual written texts. The summative assessment marksheets were very detailed in terms of the rationale for student marks, feedback for students and where students did well and less well in relation to the marking criteria. Overall, good evidence of moderation and justification of marks.

Global Issues and development

Good spread of marks for this module. Marking was fair and consistent and in the appropriate range. For the written assignment the description for students was very clear and detailed – an example of best practice. Where fail marks were given these were clear fails.

Introduction to Research

In general marking was fair and consistent. There was good evidence of a discussion of boundary change, but these tended to be on the scripts rather than on general second marker verification form – in particular where a student received a 7% reduction it would have been good to see more discussion on the rationale for this. It would be good to see a sentence or two (at most) on the specific rationale for mark changes during the moderation process particularly where there is a boundary change between the first and second marker.

Applied Research Skills

Overall the marking was fair and consistent and in the appropriate range. There was a good level of helpful and constructive feedback for students. Again, it would be helpful to see a note and rationale of the moderation process where the discrepancy between the first and

second marker affects the grade boundary. This was especially the case with the research projects where a suggested mark was reduced from 60 to 56. As an external it would be good to see more evidence of the discussion which took place whereby the second marker grade was decided as the final grade for the student. I don't disagree with the broad mark – but just would like to see some evidence of the discussion between first and second marker.

Enhancement of Quality

Please provide comment and recommendations on:

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

I can only but reiterate what I said last year.

- The modules on offer for students in both programmes are well-organised with good up-to-date content suitable for the level of study. It is clear that the content of the modules can excite and challenge students.
- The work of the strongest students is impressive and comparable to that of 1st and 2nd year undergraduate students.
- I would like to commend the video presentations – a really innovative form of assessment.
- The marking is fair and justified and there is a good spread of marks
- There is also good evidence in many of the modules of student progression.
- Overall the modules that you provide for your students are excellent, the varied topics, guidance and feedback set students up well for potential transfer to graduate and post-graduate courses at UEA.
- The module handbooks, exam papers and assignment descriptions are very clear and easy to understand for students
- In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic students have been treated equitably, fairly and with compassion and empathy. The pandemic has been unprecedented and colleagues at INTO UEA have worked hard and tirelessly to provide students with an excellent learning environment despite the challenges caused by the disruption of the pandemic.

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

Just a note to reiterate that perhaps colleagues should have discussions about some diversification of the curriculum in light of Black Lives Matters and the on-going debate regarding decolonisation of academia. This is not about re-writing curriculum, modules or courses but just an opportunity to reflect on where modules could diversify the voices and texts used. It may not always be appropriate but where it is it should be considered.

Also, please:

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

Yes. I have received all the necessary information and documentation at the beginning of my term. Any questions I had had were answered quickly and thoroughly by staff of INTO

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

In last year's report I did mention that as an external it is helpful to see the rationale and justification for the moderation of marks. Mostly this has been addressed but as noted this year there are some cases where the discussion between first and second marker is absent. This is especially important to see evidence of discussion where the moderation of marks between both marks sees a shift in the grade boundary.

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>	Progress as of February 20__ <i>(to be completed by Course Leader)</i>	Progress as of end of Year <i>(to be completed by Course Leader)</i>
<p>It would be helpful to see a brief sentence or two which explains the rational and justification of a change of mark through the moderation process between first and second marker. This is especially important where the change in mark crosses a grade boundary. It would be helpful if the brief explanation of how the moderated mark also correlates with the appropriate marking criteria for the awarded grade boundary.</p>	<p>Relevant Foundation MLs notified of recommendations via PM.</p> <p>Module leaders on research modules informed of EE's recommendations.</p>	<p>Paul Thompson</p> <p>Stuart Graham</p>	<p>May 2021.</p>		<p>Under review for upcoming year</p>
<p>NB – this is not a formal action point but worthy of response:</p> <p>I would make a suggestion that in light of both Black Lives Matter, and the on-going decolonisation of academia discussions, that consideration could go into diversifying some of the thinkers</p>	<p>The Graduate Diploma module aims to make students more comfortable in applying theories in their work, as this is always something that international (and many UK) students struggle with.</p> <p>It makes complete sense to prioritise the classical approaches, as pretty much all</p>	<p>Stuart Graham</p>	<p>November 2020</p>		

<p>and topics under study in the course. While I appreciate we are dealing with entry-level basics in the social sciences where often there is a specific 'canon' of thinkers (Weber, Marx, Durkheim) which are of course, white, male and Western, there might be scope to think about introducing more diverse voices where appropriate.</p>	<p>theories afterwards tend to be based on these. We do spend some time looking at people like Ibn Khaldun and Martineau. We place a lot of emphasis on the critique of the discipline as being, white, Western, middle-class, and male, and we look at these arguments. We also mention Japanese and Korean approaches in passing. But, if we look at things like perspectives on BLM and feminist approaches, they tend to start from either the macro or micro classical perspectives. These are things I point out, but we do not have the ability to explore this in depth on a ten week course.</p> <p>In class, students are allowed to use any approach to the topics we look at, however, they need to base them within the classical approaches. We regularly hear former students say that understanding the basic, simple approach to understanding theory via the structure/agency debate (which is pretty much the starting point for understanding social science theory) has been a</p>				
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	great help to them when studying their Masters programme.				

Report completed by:

Signature


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Date: 20 August 2020

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COURSE TEAM'S GENERAL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Recommendations feedback to relevant Foundation module leaders for consideration. (PT)

As above (SG).

Responses and Action Plan completed by:

Course Leader:

Date: 20.10.20

Paul Thompson

(Please print name and sign)

Course Leader:

Date: 30.10.20

Stuart Graham

(Please print name and sign)

Countersigned by:

Head of HE (or
equivalent)

Date:

Jeremy Moyle

02/10/20

MID-YEAR REVIEW OF ACTIONS (FEBRUARY 20)

To be completed by Course Leader:

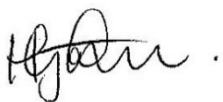
Mid-Year Review of Actions Completed:	Signature:	Date:
External Examiner Notified:	Signature:	Date:

YEAR END REVIEW OF ACTIONS (Oct 2020)


To be completed by Course Leader:

Year End Review of Actions Completed:	Signature: Paul Thompson	Date: 20.10.20
External Examiner Notified:	Signature:	Date:

To be completed by the Academic 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	
<p>Hannah Jackson Assistant Head of Partnerships</p>  <p>3 November 2020</p>		

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	
<p>Professor Zoe Butterfint Academic Director of Partnerships</p>  <p>9 November 2020</p>		

DOCUMENT OWNER: Academic Partnerships

DOCUMENT TYPE: Form

APPROVED BY: Academic Partnerships

VERSION NUMBER: 2

DUE FOR REVIEW: June 2020

VERSION LOG:

Date	Version no.	Summary of changes	Author	Approved by
May 2019	2	Updated to include table for mid-year review of action plan	Academic Partnerships	Academic Partnerships