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| ANNUAL EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT |
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Name of Institution Examined: INTO EUA

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: 2020-21

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.

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| Sufficient Evidence Checklist |
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Please can you confirm the following:

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| Programme materials |
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| 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, assessments 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. In fact, it is worth noting that there are some good examples of best practice in terms of variation of assessment. The video presentations students undertake on some modules and the documentary video assignment on the Social and Cultural Studies module for the Graduate Diploma are engaging assignments and both examples of best practice.

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 repeat my comment from last year that given the on-going debate regarding the decolonisation of the curriculum in academia, that some diversifying some of the thinkers and topics in the course would help in beginning the process of decolonising the curriculum. It is about beginning a discussion of introducing a broader range of voices, where appropriate, into the existing social sciences cannon.

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. During the period of my tenure as external examiner I have always been impressed by the range of assessments available to students. A special mention should go to the video presentations which form part of the Foundation Society and Culture module and, as noted above, the documentary assignment as part of the Social and Cultural Studies module, both examples of best practice.

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. For the most part, there is usually evidence of moderation, and the detail of that evidence has generally improved since I started as external examiner. For example, in the Foundation in International Development Studies modules there was much better evidence of moderation, and all grade changes were recorded, moderated and explained clearly – especially the reasons for why grade changes have taken place. However, there continues to be some variation of practice across the programmes. In some modules, there was not always clear explanations for why grade changes occur nor evidence of the discussion between first and second marker which led to the change of mark.

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

I am satisfied based on 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

In general, there was fair and consistent marking across the module and in the appropriate range. There was good evidence of moderation, and all grade changes were recorded, moderated and explained clearly. This was the case for the work I saw for both the January and September cohorts.

Law

Marking was appropriate, fair and consistent. A good level of feedback for students which is easy to follow and clearly explains where students struggled. For the September cohort sample, while there was evidence of very good feedback for the essay, I could not see evidence of feedback on the exam scripts nor any discussion on the moderation of grades for the exams.

Society and Culture

The marking on this module for both cohorts was in the appropriate range and was consistent across cohorts. There was good evidence of moderation and justification for revision of marks between first and second markers. There was good and detailed feedback for students – made clear by highlighting students' position against the criteria descriptors.

Graduate Diploma

Global Issues and Development

For both cohorts the marking was fair and consistent for both the assignment and the exam. The level of feedback for students was good, being constructive and helpful in assisting students in improving their grades for future work. There was a technical issue which meant some assignment scripts were missing for the September cohort, but everything I was able to access was appropriate, fair and consistent in terms of marking.

Applied Research Skills

Across the assessments the marks were fair, consistent and within the appropriate range. Good evidence of moderation and students are provided with clear and purposeful feedback. There were an interesting range of topics for the proposals and projects across both cohorts. The second marker forms which were provided demonstrated clear evidence and justification for grade changes, this was very much welcome.

Introduction to Research

Across both cohorts I agreed with marks given. The marking overall was fair and consistent and in line with sector benchmarks. The level of feedback was good – clear pointers for students on how to improve their work. Again, there were some technical issues with the uploads to MS Teams as some of the group material scripts were missing. Otherwise, marking in the appropriate range, good evidence of feedback and moderation.

Social and Cultural Studies

Overall, across both cohorts and all assessments the marking is consistent, fair and within the appropriate range. As ever, I like the documentary assignment, an example of best practice in terms of varying the assessment regime. This module had excellent examples of moderation. I was pleased to see a clear record of the discussions for why some marks are changed and others not. Again, example of best practice.

IYO Politics

For this module, again the marks were in the appropriate range, the video feedback via was excellent. Clearly, very time consuming for the lecturer, but a outstanding example of best practice in terms of feedback, especially in terms of the feedforward comments. Students are being very well served here. Good evidence of moderation throughout the module and the quality of work at the top end of the grade was impressive.

IYO Social Anthropology

For this module, the marks were fair, consistent and in the appropriate grade range. There was good quality and helpful feedback for students and good evidence of moderation.

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 have said in previous years.

- The modules on offer for students in both programmes are well-organised with good up-to-date content suitable for the level of study. The content of the modules should 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 – an innovative form of assessment.
- I would also like to make a commendation for the video feedback that has been provided on some modules. A very time-consuming model, but very impressive in terms of how it clearly walks students through their work, what they did well and how they could improve.
- The marking is fair and justified and there is a good spread of marks
- 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
- Considering the 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

In general, my previous comments from past exam reports regarding ensuring that some evidence is demonstrated of the discussion between first and second marker where grades have been revised, has mostly been acted upon. There are still some instances where it is not clear for why certain grade changes happen other than a difference in marks between first and second marker. As last year, I would continue to encourage colleagues teaching on the programmes to reflect on where modules could diversify the voices and texts used – to contribute to the decolonisation of the curriculum. As noted last year, it may not always be appropriate, but where possible should be considered. In terms of enhancing learning opportunities, the video feedback provided in some modules is a good example of best practice and there could be a consideration of wider adoption across modules where possible. However, I understand that this is quite time intensive so might not always be appropriate.

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

During my four-year tenure I have been impressed with the teaching and modules on offer in both programmes and by the standard of materials. The modules are well-organised and the content remains relevant, contemporary and timely. In my four years, I have never had an issue with the quality of marking which overall has been in the appropriate range, has been consistent and fair. Students are well-served by the feedback being provided, which is clear and purposeful and offers students important advice for future work.

The two main issue I have raised during my term of office pertain to feedback and moderation. In earlier reports I remarked how at time there was a variability across modules with regards to the quantity of feedback with some markers providing more detailed feedback than others. Since, then there has been greater standardisation across all modules. Students are receiving good levels of feedback and a clear indication of where their progress aligns with marking criteria descriptors. In terms of moderation, while there has always been evidence of moderation, I had remarked on the need in some instances to provide a sentence or two regarding decisions on the revision of grades where there is a discrepancy between two markers. This is now a practice which has become more embedded, but remains a little variable in cases.

It has been a pleasure to serve these last four years. Students are served well by the effort and time staff put into the teaching, module design, marking and feedback. Many of the innovations pertaining to assessments offered in the module I have reviewed over the last four years are examples of best practice. I wish you all the best for the future.


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> |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Standardisation across modules of providing evidence of discussion between markers when there is a discrepancy between the first and second markers grade. | Again, noted and to undergo continued improvement where possible. Some MLs prefer not to mark scripts electronically so for some modules evidence of discussion between markers and overt feedback to students may occur but may not be possible to evidence. (PT) | Paul Thompson + Thomas Cuming | April,2022 | | |
| | We will continue to improve the clarity of markers' discussions on scripts where appropriate. | Stuart Graham | 04/22 | | |
| Decolonisation of the curriculum | We will review current Module Content in relation to the School of Development Studies decolonisation agenda. | Thomas Cuming | Review: 05/22 Updates for 2022/2023 | | |
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Report completed by:

Signature



Date:

COURSE TEAM'S GENERAL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Evidence of mark changes made between first and second markers was provided in all cases, however evidence of *discussion* around these is not practical in say, Law, where a second marker may lack legal qualification in order to adjudicate and possibly alter a mark awarded, but rather concentrates upon the auditing and accuracy of totals and completeness of answers. (PT- Foundation)

Mostly pleasing comments from Rico. We will continue to improve standardisation of second marking procedures. This should become easier again once we move away from online teaching, which complicates procedures due to the differing levels of technical abilities of staff. (SG – Graduate Diploma)

Some very positive comments here and thoughtful feedback. I am Module Leader for the IYO Politics module so appreciate the endorsement of the video feedback approach. I'll continue with this and offer broader centre training on this approach. I'm interested in your comments on decolonising the curriculum. We will review this in both modules as it's relevant to our partner school's agenda. (TC – IYO Politics and Social Anthropology)

Responses and Action Plan completed by:

Course Leader: Date:
Stuart Graham
27.10.21

Thomas Cuming

27/10/21

Paul Thompson
5.10.21

(Please print name and sign)

Countersigned by:

Head of HE (or
equivalent)

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Jeremy Moyle

Date:

.....
26/10/21

MID-YEAR REVIEW OF ACTIONS (FEBRUARY 2022)

To be completed by Course Leader:

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|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Mid-Year Review of Actions Completed: | Signature: Paul Thompson, Thomas Cuming | Date: 4.2.22 |
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| External Examiner Notified: | Signature: | Date: |
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YEAR END REVIEW OF ACTIONS (MONTH 20__)

To be completed by Course Leader:

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| Year End Review of Actions Completed: | Signature: | Date: |
| External Examiner Notified: | Signature: | Date: |

To be completed by the Academic Partnerships:

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|---|--|--|
| A | No action identified | |
| B | Identified action and picked up appropriately | |
| C | Identified action and not picked up appropriately or action not identified | |
| | | |

To be completed by Academic Director of Partnerships:

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|---|--|--|
| A | No action identified | |
| B | Identified action and picked up appropriately | |
| C | Identified action and not picked up appropriately or action not identified | |
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DOCUMENT OWNER: Academic Partnerships

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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 |