

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS ANNUAL REPORT & RESPONSE FORM (Collaborations)
TAUGHT UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM**

The purpose of this report is to verify that the Collaborative Partner's academic standards and student performance is comparable to that of students of the same level, within the same or cognate disciplines at UK higher education providers; to provide assurance that the assessment process adequately measures student achievement against the intended learning outcomes for the programme and/or module(s) examined. To assist the University in ensuring the assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. **Section 1 is to be completed by the external examiner, please fill out all boxes and submit your report electronically to collaborations-external-examiners@buckingham.ac.uk by the deadline set in the applicable external examiner schedule.**

Section 1

External Examiner's Name:	Sarah Lewington
Examination Year:	Sep 21 - Sep 22
Name of Module(s) and/or Programme(s) Examined:	MA Creative Direction (Visual Culture & Creative Direction, FMP), MA Fashion Journalism (Planning & Managing Editorial Content, FMP) MA Fashion Media Strategy (Media Branding & Bus Dvpt, FMP) MA Fashion Styling (Fashion Narratives, FMP)

Approval of Assessed Work:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
You saw the specifications for the programme(s) and module(s)					x
The assessment method(s) fulfilled the criteria outlined in the specifications					x
If applicable, the assessment methods fulfilled the criteria outlined by the relevant PSRB (eg. GMC, Ofsted)					N/A
The assessment methods were appropriate and reasonably varied					x
You were supplied with the appropriate information to enable you to judge the suitability of questions					x
The assessed work reflected the specifications					x
You had sufficient time to examine draft examination questions and provide feedback					x
The number of questions and range of topics being assessed was reasonable					x
Your comments and recommendations during the approval of assessed work were acknowledged					x

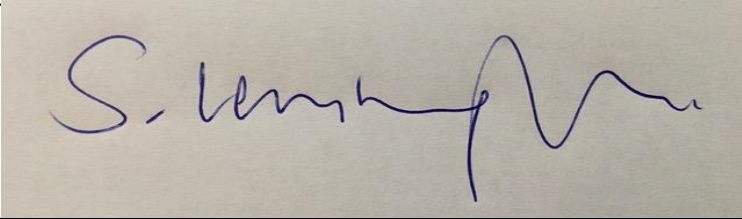
COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above
 The relevant paperwork as detailed in the questions above is always comprehensive and well-organised and I am always fully briefed and notified of any proposed changes. The team is highly reflective and makes timely adjustments to assessment and feedback methods and assessment criteria in order to benefit the students' achievement

Verification of Assessed Work:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
You verified 10% or 12 students assessed work					x
The sample represented the full range of marks achieved					x
You were given sufficient time to verify the assessed work					x
There was evidence of double marking and moderation					x
The marking process was a good quality				x	
The teaching of the programme and/or module had a positive effect on the standard achieved by the students				x	
Your comments and recommendations during the verification of assessed work were acknowledged					x
The assessment(s) enabled the students to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes					x

COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above
 The feedback provided to the students is always extremely constructive and developmental. The programme director oversees all marking of all MA programmes and there is comprehensive second marking. Industry practitioners are employed as module leaders across all programmes which results in some excellent opportunities for students. The Programme Director is the only full-time academic within the programme structure. Due to the recent departure of another full-time member of staff, he is now overseeing all MA programmes across the college. He has provided rigorous marking guides for assessors and provided training, however the courses are still reliant on part-time members of staff who are not as experienced in academic assessment. This resulted in some of the feedback comments not being reflective of the language of the rubric and of the grades achieved. These staff although incredibly beneficial in terms of their relationship to industry, were also not able to as readily relate the students' learning to the learning outcomes. The students need more staff members who are able to contextualise their learning within an academic framework.
 It is clear to see how discussions with the Programme Director are reflected in changes to the documentation on a yearly basis.

Module Assessment Board:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
You were given adequate notice to attend the Module Assessment Board					x
Your comments and recommendations to the Chair of the Exam Board were acknowledged					x
You were satisfied with the conduct of the Module Assessment Board					x

The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted					x
The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar				x	
<p>COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above The exam board is always conducted with rigour and is always extremely welcoming. The determination of awards is always fairly conducted. This year at lower levels the work is more of under-graduate rather than post-graduate standard however at higher levels the standard of work is certainly comparable to other institutions.</p>					
Good Practice:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are strengths, distinctive or innovative features in relation to the standards and assessment processes				x	
<p>COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above The second marking procedures are rigorous and ensure that where there are less experience markers, that there is parity across the cohort The student experience is at the heart of everything the course does and the relationship with industry practitioners is exemplary. Extra workshops were delivered such as writing, reflection, print production, website design and CAD in order to support the students' outcomes. Unfortunately these were poorly attended; the Programme Director is concentrating on attendance in the next academic year as this will be part of the new Students' Code of Conduct There are some highly engaging and creative briefs such as turning a character from a film into a brand. All written feedback is excellent, developmental and constructive Fashion Media Strategy as a course has really found its feet and the students' work was excellent evidencing professionalism and skills in collaboration and networking resulting in some very strong work</p>					
Areas for Improvement and Recommendations:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There aren't any resource implications that are currently affecting this process		x			
There aren't any areas the school could improve		x			
You do not have any recommendations for the school that would help develop and ensure the quality of the assessment, examination and the determination of awards process.		x			
<p>COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above There need to be more full-time members of staff working across the programmes and/or visiting lectures employed on fractional permanent contracts. As mentioned above this will ensure that the students are able to understand the context of their work in an academic framework and to ensure that there is a clearer relationship between feedback comments and the language of the rubric and learning outcomes. Next year the Programme Director intends the most experienced of the visiting lecturers to become personal tutors and to mark in pairs with the less experienced members of staff, however the Programme Director still has to oversee all of this as the only full-time member of staff. Overall student reflection is poor and there is a lack of critical thinking across all the programmes particularly in the research logs and written documents as part of the FMPs. Students are generally descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative. Reflection would benefit from frameworks such as Gibb/Kolb/Driscoll/Honey and Mumford etc etc in order to force greater criticality. The Programme director has already taken steps to ensure this will improve next year using an experienced academic to embed this on a weekly basis. There is also a lack of visual analysis throughout the courses but particularly on the MA Creative Direction and MA Styling courses where it is more apparent. Moodboards are poor both in the way they are formatted but also in the simplistic and often inappropriate images chosen. There needs to be a much greater range of visual inspiration which is connotatively analysed - imagery, typography etc. Case studies would be useful on competitors highlighting what they could apply to their projects Primary research such as visiting magazine stores needs to be more purposeful. What was the aim of the visit, what did they see, what were the connotations behind the imagery, how does it relate to the audience etc. Overall the presentation of visuals and of documents needs improvement. PDFs are saved as pages rather than spreads, there is hyphenation, lack of consideration of font size, layout, grid structure, readability, pixelation. Workshops were provided in these areas but weren't well attended and this was particularly noticeable with the Creative Direction students who should excel in this area. The MA Styling students were more literal than on the other MAs and need to be confident to style in a low-fi manner, concentrating on ideas and concepts rather than the formatting of a film and the technical aspects. The Programme Director has already taken steps to change this focus. The Programme Director is addressing the rubric as there is too much of a jump in language between the Pass grade banding which describes the work as fair to a Merit which is very good.</p>					
Communication with the School:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
You were consulted on the assessment policies and procedures in enough detail					x
You were satisfied with the extent to which you were able to participate in the assessment process					x
The contact with the school was sufficient enough, to enable you to perform the role of an external examiner					x
If applicable, your comments from your last annual report were satisfactorily addressed					x
<p>COMPULSORY: Please explain in detail, the reason for the scores above The Programme Director always ensures that I am fully briefed on all areas of assessment. He is highly reflective and is continually making adjustments to the teaching and learning in order to improve the student experience and outcomes. He does need more support in terms of permanent staff in order to ensure he is not overstretched as mentioned in many sections of the report.</p>					

Any other Comments: Overall this felt like a weaker cohort of students than in previous years. This seems to be linked to attendance rather than the experience provided and I have no doubt that the standard of work will return to the excellence I have seen in previous years.	
Electronic Signature:	
Date Report Completed:	7th October 2022

Section 2

The Dean (or their nominee) are required to give full consideration to comments and recommendations contained within the external examiner's report. **Section 2 is to be completed by the Programme Director (or their nominee), please fill out all boxes and submit your response electronically to collaborations-external-examiners@buckingham.ac.uk within ONE month of receiving the external examiner report.**

Programme Director (or their nominee) name:											
Name of Programme Examined:											
Name of Module(s) Examined:											
Response to the External Examiner:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Strongly Disagree</th> <th>Disagree</th> <th>Neutral</th> <th>Agree</th> <th>Strongly Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td align="center">x</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree					x
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree							
				x							
The collaborative partner has given full consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in the external examiner report											
<i>COMMENT: The Programme Director is the only full-time academic within the programme structure. Due to the recent departure of another full-time member of staff, he is now overseeing all MA programmes across the college. He has provided rigorous marking guides for assessors and provided training, however the courses are still reliant on part-time members of staff who are not as experienced in academic assessment. This resulted in some of the feedback comments not being reflective of the language of the rubric and of the grades achieved. These staff although incredibly beneficial in terms of their relationship to industry, were also not able to as readily relate the students' learning to the learning outcomes. The students need more staff members who are able to contextualise their learning within an academic framework.</i>	College team is aware of the complexities around the structure of the academic team that is heavily reliant on visiting lecturers and this is something that the college wishes to address moving forward. And in order to further train our core visiting lecturer team, staff development sessions have been put in place around student centered learning, good academic practice and module leadership. Further staff training sessions will be organized around assessment. Further guidance has also been written in order to standardise assessment processes and to support visiting lecturers in assessment.										
<i>COMMENT: Overall student reflection is poor and there is a lack of critical thinking across all the programmes particularly in the research logs and written documents as part of the FMPs. Students are generally descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative. Reflection would benefit from frameworks such as Gibb/Kolb/Driscoll/Honey and Mumford etc etc in order to force greater criticality. The Programme director has already taken steps to ensure this will improve next year using an experienced academic to embed this on a weekly basis.</i>	The college team recognizes this and is already working towards addressing this. Dr Kara Tennant has been taken with designing module specific activities on reflection. and she has already supported reflective activities on Fashion Media Futures module - and she will continue to support other modules moving forward. The idea behind this is for Kara to oversee the teaching and supporting of reflection across the whole MA provision in order for her to build on students learning around this. Kara is also introducing more variety of theoretical frameworks to support reflection as we have previously only utilized Gibbs for this.										
<i>COMMENT: There is also a lack of visual analysis throughout the courses but particularly on the MA Creative Direction and MA Styling courses where it is more apparent. Moodboards are poor both in the way they are formatted but also in the simplistic and often inappropriate images chosen. There needs to be a much greater range of visual inspiration which is connotatively analysed - imagery, typography etc.</i>	More workshops will be included around this moving forward. The course team is also considering of introducing visual and content analysis as a formal research method as part of Critical Research module in order to provide students with more critical tools in tackling this.										
<i>COMMENT: Primary research such as visiting magazine stores needs to be more purposeful. What was the aim of the visit, what did they see, what were the connotations behind the imagery, how does it relate to the audience etc.</i>	Noted - the course team is designing task sheets to support study visits for next term.										
<i>COMMENT: Overall the presentation of visuals and of documents needs improvement. PDFs are saved as pages rather than spreads, there is hyphenation, lack of consideration of font size, layout, grid structure, readability, pixelation. Workshops were provided in these areas but weren't well attended and this was particularly noticeable with the Creative Direction students who should excel in this area.</i>	Unfortunately the engagement with visual communication classes last year in general was poor and student opted for 'easier' and more 'generic' tools such as Canva. This year, the course team has further developed the visual communication delivery and it has been noted that students are considerably more engaged with this part of their studies. Some module briefs now require students to use InDesign for presentation in order to encourage students to use professional presentation tools.										

<p><i>COMMENT: The MA Styling students were more literal than on the other MAs and need to be confident to style in a low-fi manner, concentrating on ideas and concepts rather than the formatting of a film and the technical aspects. The Programme Director has already taken steps to change this focus.</i></p>	<p>Yes, the course team has also acknowledged this. We are currently designing modules briefs for next term and we are actively reflecting on what we learned last year teaching this programme for the first time.</p>
<p><i>COMMENT: The Programme Director is addressing the rubric as there is too much of a jump in language between the Pass grade banding which describes the work as fair to a Merit which is very good.</i></p>	<p>The course team is improving the assessment rubrics for the new academic year. We are moving to using step marking and we are improving the language as well as descriptors used in the rubrics to provide more accurate guidance for both students and assessors on how grades are determined in relation to specific learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Any other Comments:</p>	<p>Once again, we welcome Sarah's continuous support and rigorous feedback that really helps us improve our approaches to teaching & learning, the way in which we approach designing the curriculum as well as how we create some of the processes that underpin and support the way in which we manage things from assessment to delivery.</p>
<p>Electronic Signature:</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Johannes Reponen</i></p>
<p>Date Report Completed:</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24.11.2022</p>