



EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT FORM

First Degrees and Taught Master's Degrees

The purpose of this form is to ensure that the quality of the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards is maintained and developed at the University of Buckingham. In addition, it provides valuable feedback in respect of standards set for the awards, student performance and an overview of the programme(s) as a whole.

Please complete all of the sections of this report as fully as possible, and make sure to state specific module names where necessary. Please sign (electronically) at the end of the form when you have done so.

USE OF REPORTS

This report will be regarded as a public document within the University and form part of the documentation for internal review panels, professional bodies, and QAA submissions. The University also shares external examiner reports with the student body. It is therefore important that individuals, particularly students, should not be named or be easily identifiable.

External Examiners should be aware that reports will be made available to students. **Please state here if you do not wish this report to be shared with the student body:**

External Examiners are free to send a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor if they wish. **SUBMITTING YOUR REPORT**

Please submit your report electronically to collaborations-external-examiners@buckingham.ac.uk within ONE MONTH of the Examiners' Meeting.

_ Name of Collaborative Partner Conde Nast College of Fashion

**Examination period examined (eg
June/September/December/Other
)**

**Programmes for which appointed
(April - August) (2020/21)**

Name of External

Jayne Hall Cunnick

Examiner Year Appointed

2016

(e.g. LLB, BSc Economics, MBA) BA (Hons) Fashion Communication

Modules Examined Level 6

- .Fashion Business & Entrepreneurship L6
- .Fashion Futures L6
- .Fashion Theory Dissertation L6
- .Independent Fashion Communication Project (IFCP)
L6

Level 5

- .Fashion Branding & Communication L5
- .Option – Magazine Publishing L5
- .Option – Fashion Styling L5
- .Option – Fashion Journalism L5
- .Industry Placement – next exam board

1. CURRICULUM

1.1 Have you seen the syllabus for the modules(s)? Please comment on whether this represented a reasonable spread of topics for this subject.

The industry experience and connections among the team ensure that the curriculum is always current and relevant. This time around the team have wherever possible embedded new ways of operating amid the covid 19 pandemic. The content remains engaging and a lively mix of permanent and visiting lecturers ensures industry currency.

1.2 To what extent were you consulted on the content and assessment procedures of the programme(s) with which you are associated?

Moderations and alterations to the briefs are always forwarded for scrutiny before being actioned. I have been able to scrutinise assignment briefs in advance, for the modules listed above and they are appropriate and relevant at L5 and L6.

1.3 Please comment on the assessment methods for the programme/modules. Are these appropriate and do they fulfil the criteria outlined in the Programme/Module Specification(s)?

The team undertakes comprehensive reflection on the teaching, content, curriculum and assessment of every module and the assignment briefs I have seen are a good reflection of the content of the modules and are appropriate for a course of this nature as well as being in line with other courses at this level with which I am familiar, any changes are carefully considered and forwarded for approval.

2. ASSESSMENT – DRAFT EXAMINATION PAPERS

2.1 Were you given sufficient time to examine draft examination papers and to provide feedback to internal markers?

Yes

2.2 Were you supplied with the appropriate information (e.g. module specifications) regarding the modules being examined to enable you to judge appropriately the suitability of questions?

During this (online) visit I have had the opportunity to both scrutinise all relevant samples across the provision as well as meet with the BA course leader.

I have had the opportunity to scrutinise module briefs, assignments, feedback sheets and overall grade profiles across both level 5 and level 6. The work sampled demonstrated a range of responses to the assignments and is generally appropriate for a course of this nature, being in line with and often exceeding other courses at this level with which I am familiar.

2.3 Did the examination paper/s reflect the syllabus/i and were the questions reasonably spread across the syllabus/i?

Yes

2.4 Was the number of questions required to be answered reasonable, and was there sufficient choice (both in range of topics and number) of questions?

Yes

3. ASSESSMENT – EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

3.1 Were you given sufficient time to evaluate a representative sample of scripts and assessed work and

was this workload manageable in the time permitted?

I was able to sample assignments across the grade boundaries for the modules outlined above, and I have had the opportunity to scrutinise the associated feedback and grades.

3.2 Please comment on the quality of the marking process (was there double-marking/blind double marking and were there comments on scripts)?

The double and sometimes triple marking and moderation process within the L6 dissertation module is very robust and ensures that grades are thoroughly considered. The feedback I sampled was uniformly good with reflection on the grades attained, and there are some excellent examples of feed forward, detailing exactly how students can improve their performance in forthcoming assignments and modules. Feedback is given in a timely way and I am satisfied that the grades awarded across the course are fair and equitable.

3.3 Did you see the scripts (and any course work or continuous assessment element) of all borderline candidates, and were you given the opportunity to see the scripts (and any course work or continuous assessment element) of all other candidates?

Yes

3.4 Please comment on the spread of questions answered by the candidates. Was the whole of the syllabus covered in teaching?

Yes - the syllabus is carefully spread across the range of assessments.

3.5 Please comment on the teaching of the course, and the subsequent standard achieved by the candidates.

I have been given the opportunity to sample work from across the grade bandings for L5 & L6 work within the BA (Hons) Fashion Communication course.

The college has made extremely good arrangements to establish a springboard for the graduating students, including a Conde Nast website page for each student, print and digital graduate magazine to showcase their work as well as a graduate film on the subject of Adaptation, again as a response to the changing circumstances we are working under. These will be launched at an online launchpad event with the usual high end industry presence.

4

These students feel very prepared for the world they are about to enter.

There is evidence of management support for the team and students to engage in the very latest online working practices with IT staff development strongly supported – this in turn cascades outwards to everyone in the college, ensuring that the best use of available online tools.

The work evidences currency and in most cases exceeds the standards with which I am familiar in similar courses and in HE currently. The college continues to trailblaze in terms of delivering HE and this should be supported ongoing. The levels of student engagement across the board far exceeds that with which I have been familiar in HE since March 2020, the management, the course team and the students should be commended for this.

All marking and moderation is subject to an extremely robust process, with all assignment submissions being

subject to 2nd marking and most 3rd or 4th marking. The teams works very closely together to ensure the efficacy of the academic judgement applied to the marking of all work. This is especially evident in the dissertation module.

Academic judgement applied to unfair practice is appropriately intelligent, thorough and nuanced on a case by case basis.

3.6 Please comment on whether the assessment process enabled the students to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Yes, the assignments are well thought out and regularly modified and updated in order to respond to the indicative content of each module in a relevant and contemporary way. There is a lively range of assignment briefs and these allow students to demonstrate learning, engagement and skills in a range of mediums such as portfolio work and academic writing, which is essential in this sector.

4. EXAMINATION BOARD

*4.1 Were you given adequate notice of your required attendance at the Examiners' Meeting? **Yes***

4.2 Were you satisfied with the extent to which you were able to participate in the assessment process and the Board of Examiners?

Yes

4.3 Please comment on the conduct of the Board of Examiners

The board was appropriately quorate and conducted with relevant academic rigour via Teams.

5. ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ENHANCEMENT

5.1 In your view, are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? If not, please give a statement of the respects in which they fall short.

All processes observed were deemed to be robust and any unfair practice dealt with fairly, based on my observations I am satisfied that grades and thus subsequent awards will be underpinned by sound quality processes.

5

5.2 Are there any other comments you wish to make about any aspects of the assessment and examinations process with which you have been involved?

The grading was confident and there is evidence that the team have made full use of the marking scheme available to them. The feedback given is appropriate and thorough, offering clear feed-forward as well as detailed reflection on the grade attained.

5.3 In your view are the standards of student performance comparable with similar programmes or

subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar? If not, please give a statement of the respects in which they fall short.

In many cases student performance has exceeded that with which I am familiar in other similar courses, this BA course is rigorous and the team work hard to ensure that the students get a sound underpinning of the fashion industry alongside a thorough academic education, this is evidenced through the extremely high standards of work produced by the students.

5.4 Was the contact with the University during the process sufficient to enable you to perform the role of external examiner satisfactorily?

Yes

5.5 Please comment on whether your comments from your last external examiner's report were, in your opinion, satisfactorily addressed by the academic department.

There is evidence of increasing parity across the type and amount of written feedback and I am pleased to see this as a response to previous observations.

Fashion Branding and Communication

Students are demonstrating a high level of competence in communication skills as well as all of the other LO's for this module, there is some exceptional work at the top end deserving of high grades. Evidence of very effective teaching in the depth of knowledge students demonstrate through their work. Robust presentation assessments, recorded evidence of internal moderation as well as highly competent online working.

Fashion Buying - Option

Evidence of well-planned and well executed change to online delivery, working with other changes in the course due to covid, demonstrates a flexible and resilient tutor. There is evidence of good reflection and the idea of updating the module to respond to current changes to Fashion retail is sound. The class test seems mainly to have worked well online.

Fashion Journalism - Option

Some thoughtful reflection about the word count and blog as elements of the assignment here. Some very interesting work at the top end of the banding. Good clarity in student feedback. Students engaging with very current topics in their assignments demonstrating a clear awareness of the wider context in which they are

operating.

Magazine Publishing - Option

Visually striking throughout the range of submissions – well done! Flexibility and quick thinking in the revision of the brief due to covid. Evidence of hard work keeping the students engaged given the lockdown and this has paid off in the outcomes.

Fashion Business & Entrepreneurship

Some development of new staff within this module has been handled efficiently and smoothly and their marking and assessment approach has swiftly been brought in line with the college norms. That said they have also been very complimentary about student ability. Evidence of reflection on the best way to improve the teaching of the elements that have been subject to recent minor mods which is great to see. High number of firsts but indicative of student ability and all deserved.

Fashion Theory Dissertation

Good range of grades across the banding, conversations with the CL evidence a comprehensive and robust marking process, I am satisfied that there has been full and broad academic consideration of all of the grades. Dissertations are very visually attractive whilst still maintaining adherence to the appropriate protocols of academic writing. Evidence of strong student progression from proposal stage to final stage, indicating engagement and a supportive team. This module seems to have evolved in recent years with evidence of student engagement with methodologies, primary research and general academic protocols – well done to this module leader and team!

Independent Project

There are a number of firsts in this module, but these are all in their own unique way well deserved, I am satisfied that these assignments have been through a rigorous assessment process and that the grading is sound. This project is the culmination of all of the course effort and these assignments reflect this, there is evidence of knowledgeable and well prepared students, even at the lower end of the grade banding. Again, well done to the module team. The work submitted for this module is professional and capable across the bandings.

5.7 Based on your experience as external examiner on the programme, do you consider that there are any resource implications (staffing, physical resources, student access to resources etc) that have been revealed during the process?

As the provision has grown across the college offering so the staff team continues to grow – due to the shift to online teaching and learning there are no issues with space in light of this growth.

5.8 Any additional comments

There is evidence of growth across the college offering and there is, more than ever a need to support those staff who are or would wish to become research active and further their own professional development – this always feeds back into teaching and research led teaching is always current and exciting for students and staff alike, keeping any learning dynamic and forward thinking.

The college and therefore the course is operating without a Dean and the role and responsibilities have been divided between the senior academics, this seems to be working out well, and each person is being supported to develop their own role in line with their skill set and interests.

Time could be set aside for some of the team to write up what they have developed throughout the lockdown period, into formal pedagogical research, there are lessons to be learned from their successes in delivering online teaching which deserves credit. I would like an opportunity to meet with students during the next visit.

This year has been incredibly difficult for everyone in HE but this course continues to demonstrate excellence, and

7

the forthcoming re-validation is an opportunity to capitalise on all of the hard work so far as well as maintain the high quality, standards, currency and momentum. This course is an exemplar!

5.9 If this is your final report as an external examiner at Buckingham, then please use the space below to complete an End of Term Review

N/A

Signed Dated



13th October 2020

Please submit your report electronically to collaborations-external-examiners@buckingham.ac.uk within ONE month of the Examiners' Meeting.

Collaborative Partner's Response:

Please respond to the key points mentioned and indicate how you plan to address each issue raised.

Ref: Comment from External Examiner Response/Action to be taken

Ref	Comment from External Examiner	Response / Action to be taken
5.8	Time could be set aside for some of the team to write up what they have developed throughout the lockdown period, into formal pedagogical research, there are lessons to be learned from their successes in delivering online teaching which deserves credit.	<p>The CL is currently writing the Course Report for 2019/20 and will include reflections on how the team responded to the covid pandemic and lockdown.</p> <p>In terms of formal pedagogic research - this is something that the CL and team would like to investigate further</p> <p>The CL is in the process of applying for SFHEA and will include elements of this reflection and research in their application</p> <p>The lessons learned from this period of time regarding the transfer to online / blended learning and teaching, the use of new technology will be written up and shared within the institution</p>
5.8	I would like an opportunity to meet with students during the next visit.	This will be arranged
		<p>Overall the comments from the External Examiner are positive throughout and we welcome such supportive feedback.</p> <p>There are no specific actions that are required other than those mentioned in reference to 5.8, and the course team will continue to review</p>

		and respond to the current and ongoing covid situation to consider the academic requirements of the course and students' needs.