



Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP)

External Examiner report template

An electronic copy of this report should be sent to:

cicp-external-examiners@open.ac.uk

Or, a signed hard copy sent to:

The Director, CICP, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, United Kingdom.

You should also submit a copy of this report to the institution.

Section A: General information

Institution:	Leeds City College
Programme:	BA (Hons)/ FdA Fashion, Theatrical and Media Hair and Make-up
Subject examined:	Fashion, Theatrical and Media Hair and Make-up
Name of examiner:	Alexandra Wathey
Address:	Work address: University College Birmingham, Office 905SR, Summer Row, Birmingham. B3 1PB. Home address: 18 Hathaway Close, Penkridge, Staffordshire. ST19 5PD.
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Current year of appointment	Second year of appointment, academic year 2019-2020
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Section B: External examiner's report

The reporting structure of this section is intended to help draw out issues which may require attention by the Institution or the University. It should not be seen as limiting in any way the range of issues which may be addressed or the level of detail given. The report will be considered as part of the annual evaluation process and, as such, external examiners are encouraged to be as frank and open as possible, but avoiding wherever possible references to individual staff or students. External examiners' attention is also drawn to 'The Guide for external examiners of OU validated awards', which should be forwarded by partner institutions to their external examiners.

Please comment as appropriate on:

1. The range of assessed material and information provided by the institution on which your report is based.

Module Handbooks, Internal Moderation documentation of the Module Handbooks, samples of moderated work from each module, as well as internal moderation documents relating to the assessed student's work per module were provided in good time to review before the Exam Boards took place.

Work from a good spread of grades was sampled from each module of the programme at all levels (4-6). There was an impressive range of assessment methods ranging from the traditional such as reports and essays to develop academic practice, to a wide range of creative assessment methods such as blogs, websites, case studies, timed practical assessments, exhibitions, reflective portfolios, sketchbooks, mood boards, work logs, presentations and design pitches which were pertinent in order to meet the learning outcomes of the assessments of this vocational programme, as well as develop graduate attributes to prepare students for onward employment. Where presentations and pitches were used as the assessment method, the institution provided me with clear video recordings of the practical assessment. All materials were well organised, making it very clear and accessible for examination to take place.

2. Whether the standards set are appropriate for the award, or award element, by reference to any agreed subject benchmarks, qualifications framework, programme specification or other relevant information.

FdA - The standards set are appropriate to the levels of the award in reference to the QAA Arts and Design 2017 Subject Benchmark, QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement 2015, QAA Foundation Degree qualification benchmark May 2010 and the July 2018 Programme Specifications (version 2).

BA(Hons) - The standards set are appropriate to the levels of the award in reference to the QAA Arts and Design 2017, QAA Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies 2016, and QAA Dance, Drama and Performance 2015 Subject Benchmarks, as well as the Programme Specification 2016 (version 1).

Other information - There does not appear to be the making, application and colouring of bald caps

formally written into the design and delivery of the programme. As in my last report, this may be worth considering in relation to the National Occupational Standards SKSHM10 and SKSHM6 2014 framework, however I am of the understanding that the teaching team run 'master classes' during Reading Weeks etc that may cover this aspect.

3. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.

Overall, learners demonstrate autonomy at an extremely high level and possess excellent graduate attributes in comparison to their peers on comparable programmes. This is encouraged by the forward focus of the programme in regards to employability; there are a wide range of enrichment opportunities made available including guest speakers and work-related projects which hone these skills.

Postiche making and application and hair cutting skills have parity with other students on similar programmes. Students' overall product knowledge and technical skills in relation to prosthetics also has parity with their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.

Photographs of student's practical work are of a professional standard which gives the students a competitive edge. No doubt this is due to the fantastic resource of the photographic studio at Prime Studios, as well as appropriate locations being utilised as backdrops in certain modules.

Overall, learners show a higher level of technical ability in using digital technology to enhance their work and contextualise it to industry standards in comparison to their peers; this is reflected in the wide variety of methods that learners have submitted their work for assessment.

4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

It is nice to see that students are embracing CAD more and the quality of their designs have really improved since last academic year and this has become a strength of the students. Traditional drawing skills have also seen an improvement. Learners demonstrate a good aptitude for resourceful practice and problem solving skills. They also display a very strong awareness of budget, brief and employer requirements throughout all aspects of the programme.

Learners demonstrate a strong ability to work on a diverse range of models and are able to communicate their thoughts, inspirations and concepts articulately and sensitively in verbal, written and visual form. During presentations, learners present with professionalism and confidence.

Despite having a guest speaker attend to show students airbrushing techniques in the '2D and 3D Body Art' module, learners did not use this technique within their submission. It would be beneficial to see some more skills development and confidence using airbrushes (Covid-allowing) in both fashion and sfx work.

Academic standards have also improved since last year, with a higher level of critical analysis and reflection demonstrated by students across the programme. Learners still tend to rely on quotations quite heavily in their written work instead of paraphrasing, or explaining the quotation to demonstrate their understanding which could be further developed.

5. The quality of teaching and learning, as indicated by student performance

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent, with innovative methods employed to increase student engagement and replicate an authentic working environment. It is clear to see that learners

are highly motivated in their studies and student achievement this year has been particularly high- students have produced some exceptional pieces of work in spite of adverse circumstances of coronavirus; this is a clear testament of the exceptional level of support provided by the teaching team.

6. The quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources

The curriculum equips learners with a diverse range of skills and knowledge required for success in various hair and make-up industry sectors and is current and in line with expectations. Reading lists are current and relevant to support the subject.

Learners have excellent opportunities to engage with a variety of guest speakers and in work placements which enriches the curriculum and student experience.

Classrooms and facilities are of a good standard and fit for purpose for teaching and learning in this vocational subject. Course materials are of good quality and it is particularly advantageous that students each have a lace-fronted wig to practice creating a variety of styles with- this is put to good use throughout the course of their study. Students are also equipped with a Google Chromebook which ensures engagement and compatibility with excellent digital tools such as Google Classroom, and these tools have been used successfully.

The photographic studio at Prime Studios is a great asset in helping learners to build portfolios of a professional quality and in developing the students' knowledge in a professional setting. The studio allows make-up applications and touch-ups to be conducted within the studio, authentically mimicking industry practices.

7. The quality and fairness of the assessments, in particular their:

(i) design and structure

The assessments are appropriate to the level of study and overall, the briefs are clear, with the grading criteria contextualised to the assessment. Most assignments provide choices of topics/themes to promote equality and diversity and to cater to learners' personal interests and career aspirations and are also designed with meeting industry requirements in mind. There are ample opportunities for formative feedback identified in the SOW to support learner achievement and the policy for draft submissions is fair.

The assessments are fair and have been adjusted extremely well to adapt to the challenges of lockdown, without compromise to students meeting the learning outcomes. Students have not been restricted in coming up with their own creative approaches and solutions and providing very individual responses to meet the requirements of the assessment, often going above and beyond and creating truly remarkable pieces of work reflecting industry standards and current trends.

Learners are often given autonomy in the methods of presentation of their submission, some choosing to do websites, whereas others utilising google presentations or sketchbooks for example. Whilst the assessments are marked fairly with a strong focus on content and achievement of the learning outcomes, in general perhaps the formatting of assessments could be stated on the assignment briefs more clearly so that there is greater parity amongst students.

Length of presentations are generally appropriate for learners to meet the intended learning outcomes successfully. For the Work Related Learning module, there was no word count specified on the assignment briefs (T1 & T2). This may be useful in order to encourage learners to be a little

less descriptive in their submissions (and prevent those students who go a little off topic).

For the Creative Identity and Entrepreneurial Skills assessment (T2), good practice was demonstrated in regards to ensuring fairness of assessment of their websites, as students were required to submit screen shots of their website along with a hyperlink in order to ensure that work has been completed by the deadline.

As commented on last academic year in regards to Creative Postiche, the two assignments are very closely linked and clearly cross over. To avoid over-assessment of the final images (assessing advertently or inadvertently across the two assessments), it has been suggested to the team to separate the LOs differently so that one component just focuses on the design/historical research element (LO2, LO3, LO4) and the other component focuses on the realisation of the design by constructing and applying postiche (LO1, LO5, LO6 & LO7) for example. I understand that this has since been taken to module review to make these changes for increased fairness of assessment.

(ii) relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme

Overall, the assessments allow students to meet the intended learning outcomes extremely well. Assessors provide specific and targeted feedback underneath each learning outcome. It was really commendable that the Covid-19 adjusted assignments did not impact upon the student's ability to meet the learning outcomes of any of the modules.

In the Creative Hair and Make-up Design 2 module, it has been recommended that the two assessed components could be combined into a 100% piece of coursework, as students tend to be meeting all the learning outcomes of the module in each assessment. For a level 4 piece of coursework at 20 credits, the quantity of work that the students are required to produce could be reduced.

(iii) marking

Overall, in depth, personalised feedback has been provided to students in relation to the learning outcomes and grade descriptors highlighting the work's strengths and areas for onward development. Language used is consistently synonymous with the grading descriptors. Overall, grading is fair and reflective of the submitted work in relation to the academic level.

It is clear that standardisation meetings have taken place when multiple assessors have assessed work in a single component/module, as there is consistency in assessor's comments, grading and amount of feedback provided. Internal moderation is evidenced and is thorough and transparent throughout the programme.

8. Where the programme has specific work-related learning outcomes (e.g. Foundation Degrees) please comment on the assessment and achievement of these outcomes, including employers' involvement where relevant.

There was excellent work from students specifically in the Work Related Project (component 2) assessment for the Level 5 Work Related Learning module, with many students gaining valuable and high profile work experience in pertinent industry sectors that they wish to enter into. This is a credit to the hard work and contacts made by both the teaching team and students. I understand that the module may run long and thin next year which will increase the opportunities for work

placements across the year. It was lucky that Covid-19 did not impact the ability to undertake placements and achieve this module this academic year, as it was achieved before lockdown.

Within the work sampled, students achieved all learning outcomes, systematically documenting work placements, personal thoughts, feelings and ideas and communicating them insightfully through the use of diaries and blogs. It was clear from the work produced that students were able to operate professionally in a range of work related industry settings, specifically showcasing understanding of the importance of effective communication skills, teamwork and critically analysing issues when working in a high paced environment such as hygiene and health and safety. Employers were given a standardised and comprehensive form to complete, providing valuable feedback to students and assessors in relation to student's performance of hard and soft skills. This facilitated assessment and students' own reflection of their performance, with higher achieving students demonstrating excellent critical reflection in regards to personal and professional development within the working environment, linking their experience to industry requirements using pertinent reflective theories.

Feedback and grading for the assessments of this module were consistent between assessors and were reflective of the submissions. Moderation was transparent and where there were slight discrepancies of agreement in grades between moderator and assessor, it was good to see that there was a focus more on content and the learner successfully meeting the learning outcomes as opposed to the student demonstrating good ITC skills.

9. The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards, briefing of external examiners, access of external examiners to essential materials, etc.

All documentation was very well organised with each module having Module Handbook, IM of Module Handbook, sample of student's work and IM documentation for each assignment component sample. These were made available in good time before exam boards and were shared remotely via Google Drive. It would be beneficial to have edit access to IM sheets of Module handbooks so that the external section can be completed prior to delivery of the module for next academic year.

Excellent communication was maintained throughout the academic year between institution and myself. Dates and times of scheduled exam boards were provided well in advance and were well organised and operated smoothly, with appropriate briefing of examiners beforehand.

10. Have all the issues identified in your previous report been addressed by the institution?

Yes

If no, please comment

N/A

11. *(For chief external examiners or those with responsibility for the whole programme – if in doubt please check with the appointing institution)*

Please confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme as a whole, including all its pathways, modules or individual courses are consistent and appropriate,

and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair and sound across the provision.

N/A

12. Any other comments

I have provided detailed module feedback to the teaching team via telephone conversations and follow up written notes via email to the programme leader.

Please ensure that you sign and date below, if sending a hard copy of this report

Signed:

A. E. Wathey



Date:

21/07/2020