



External Examiner Report

Name of External Examiner:	Dr Carool Kersten
Title:	Reader in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World
Institution:	King's College London
Programme Being Reviewed:	AKU-ISMC Master of Arts in Muslim Cultures 2016-17

IMPORTANT PLEASE NOTE:

- Once completed, please send your form to the AKU-ISMC Registrar's Office within seven days of the **final** Exam Board meeting.
- If there is insufficient space for your comments in any section, please continue on a separate sheet, labelling it appropriately.
- External Examiner Reports will be copied and sent to the relevant Programme Heads, Committees and Boards concerned. Excerpts may be included in reports published by the Institute, so please avoid reference to individual students (where appropriate, decisions on individual students will be recorded in the Board's minutes).

		Please mark X where appropriate	YES	NO	N/A
Section I : General					
1	Did you receive copies of relevant documents (e.g. syllabus, marking schemes, etc.)?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Did you see a sufficient number of scripts and other assessed work, including those of distinction, borderline and failed candidates, to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Were you invited to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Was the general standard of marking and assessment satisfactory?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Were there satisfactory marking schemes for the overall degree, individual papers and individual questions (where applicable)?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Were scripts/essays double-marked internally according to AKU-ISMC requirements?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

8	Please add any comments you wish to make on the above questions.			
<p>It became evident in the exam board meeting, that faculty would like to reflect on and make improvements to the text used in the marking criteria document, because in some instances these offered insufficiently clear guidance or were open to interpretations that were too wide, leaving undesirable uncertainties, as well as discrepancies in allocation of marks by 1st & 2nd markers.</p>				
Section II: Quality of Teaching and Learning				
Please mark X where appropriate			YES	NO
9	Were the standards set for the awards appropriate for a Master's level qualification in this subject?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Were the standards of student performance comparable to similar programmes in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	<p>Were the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?</p> <p>Great care is taken by faculty to the processes and procedures defined under AKU's QA Policy as it pertains to assessment. This is reflected in course documentation, de feedback on assessments, and the deliberations and validation of marks in the exam board meeting. I commend the faculty for the attention to detail, and to the chair for the room given for the faculty to have a frank exchange of views on how marks were reached. As External Examiner I have also been called on to pay particular attention to specific pieces of assessment or offer a ruling when it was difficult for 1st & 2nd examiners to reach agreement. All this reflects a carefully designed and executed assessment process.</p>			
12	If the answers to any of these questions were negative, please comment on why.			
Section III: Assessment				
<p>Please comment on the assessment methods used in the programme. Please in particular address the following points:</p> <p>Were the forms of assessment appropriate for the learning outcomes for each course?</p> <p>Is the feedback given to the students generally adequate and constructive?</p> <p>Was the information provided to students about the assessment methods explicit and accessible?</p> <p>Was the volume of assessed work required manageable for students and faculty?</p>				
The syllabi/course outlines reflect a variety of assessment methods, which is always a challenge in the				

humanities: no only essays or exams, also presentations, portfolio and other forms of written work. The expectations and requirements are clearly defined too.

In most instances the feedback is detailed, offering both general narrative and in-text comments. In only a few instances 1st/2nd marker feedback were not distinguishable, or it appeared that only 1st marker, in other only 2nd marker comments were visible. Especially with weak work, it is important to provide student with detailed comment. In some instances students would benefit from more elaborate comments (Muslim Reformist Thought MCIC1407, Muslim Reformist Thought, script 501471, narrow pass of 60, but only very brief comment – advice to get help with academic writing; SOSC 7004-C001, script 510310. 69 – no narrative, only in-text comments). Only in the case of the course ‘Sacred across Cultures’ no comments or mark was visible, this may have disappeared in the conversion of the document.

Comments on the programme

13	Please comment on matters such as: the balance, content and coherence of the degree/diploma programme and the appropriateness of any compulsory courses; fulfilment of stated course objectives; suitability of methods and adequacy of teaching as reflected by the standards achieved by candidates; particular strengths and weaknesses of the Programme Please also identify any significant issues which you feel need to be addressed.
	I can only repeat my observation of last year; that offering 20 courses in a programme of relative modest size in terms of enrolment is very impressive
14	Do you have any further comments to offer

Section IV: Institutional Aspects

15	<i>Please list any serious institutional issues and/or concerns that you would wish to bring to the attention of senior management of the University. It is envisaged that this section will only be completed in exceptional circumstances.</i>

16	Section V: Response to Previous Report <i>Please confirm if you received an appropriate response to issues or actions raised in your previous report(s).</i>
	I note that also language courses are now double marked at the external examiners recommendation for uniformity and standardization of assessments. This is also reflected in the use of feedback forms.

17	Section VI: Any Other Comments
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Signed  Date **25 October 2017**

Completed forms should be returned to the AKU-ISMC Registrar's Office within 7 days of the Exam Board Meeting and can be sent via email to **ismc.registraroffice@aku.edu** or by post to:

Registrar's Office
The Aga Khan University
Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
210 Euston Road
London NW1 2DA

We would also invite you to provide feedback and make recommendations to us on the design and ease of use of this form.