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**Arab Open University**

**Summary of External Examiners Reports**

**Academic Year: 2024-2025**

**Semester: Fall**

**Programme: FLS**

**Tracks: MA in TEFL**

**No of External Examiners of the Programme: 1**

**No of Externally Examined Courses: 9**

1. **Chief External Examiners' response and Comments: Prof. John Strachan**

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| **Please confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme are consistent and appropriate, and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair, reliable across the provision.** |
| * “I can confirm that the standards set are appropriate for the award element, based on my knowledge of the appropriate documentation shared with me over previous years (and updated on a regular basis, where necessary). I also confirm that the standards here are equivalent to comparable courses in Children’s Literature in Great Britain.” |

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| **Please confirm that sufficient information and evidence of professional work and students’ assessment were -received by the programmes’ external examiners to enable them to t fulfill their role.** |
| * I saw a good number of scripts and was very pleased to note consistency of marking throughout. There was some very sophisticated analysis in the higher-end scripts, offering illuminating takes on both classic and more contemporary texts in children’s’ literature.” |

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| **Commendations:** |
| * I strongly commend the way in which external examiner feedback is dealt with in this module, and in the Faculty of Language Studies in general. EEs are invariably listened to, with our feedback informing pedagogic practice and addressed directly in the agenda for each CAC and not addressed in some perfunctory manner. This is very good practice. |

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| **Suggestions for Enhancement** |
| None |

1. **Extracts from External Examiners report form**

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Christina Gkonou**

**Examined Modules: EFL501, EFL502, EFL503, EFL504, EFL505, EFL506, EFL507, EFL508, EFL529**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

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| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The standards set for each of the programme’s modules are appropriate for the award and are also in line with standards set for master’s awards and courses on the same or similar/related subjects (e.g. TESOL, Applied Linguistics, (English) Language Teaching) across UK universities. In other words, the standards are comparable to what is offered on postgraduate courses on the same area in other universities |

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| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| * From the samples of work produced by students that I have seen so far (both TMAs and exams), my overall impression is that the programme includes strong, hard-working and motivated students. Their level of English is very good, one important reason being that most of them are already appointed as English language teachers in schools or they aspire to work as English language teachers once they graduate from the AOU and therefore want to improve in their language skills as much as possible. In terms of subject-specific knowledge, students seem to be able to grasp this well and approach it in a critical manner. |

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| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes. |
| Students demonstrate strong ability to transfer their subject-specific knowledge to their classroom practice and to think in terms of practice too…. Strengths include strong English language skills, good understanding and knowledge of the subject, understanding of research methods and evaluation of possible research topics, and critical thinking ability. |

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| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * In total, I have seen a lot more strengths than weaknesses among the MA TEFL student cohorts, this time also including work on some modules by students at the AOU Lebanon branch. Strengths include strong English language skills, good understanding and knowledge of the subject, understanding of research methods and evaluation of possible research topics, and critical thinking ability. I have not identified any weaknesses as such and I believe that the slightly weaker students receive appropriate amount of individualised support and guidance in order to improve. |

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| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| * Assessments are well designed and cover topics that are relevant to the content of each module. With respect to exam questions in particular, these are written in a way such that students can answer them within the allocated time. In general, questions are clear and come with clear and specific instructions (for example in cases where students are given options to choose from). * I have received TMAs and scanned exam scripts completed by students in the fall semester of the academic year of 2024-2025 and from different band scores, as well as copies of the assessment rubrics and marking criteria. Prior to this, I was also sent the assignment titles and exam questions for all of the modules listed on the previous page, and was asked to provide feedback and comments. My feedback was then shared with the relevant GCCs and where changes were proposed, these were implemented and I was sent revised versions of the TMAs and exam papers. * Each assessment (TMAs and exam scripts) included in-text comments and summative feedback by the module marker. I confirm that I have received sufficient evidence to enable my role to be fulfilled.   All assessments are of the appropriate standard; fairness and consistency are also strived for and ensured. |

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| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| * The marking rubric is detailed and well explained, thus helping students to understand what they will be assessed on and how. * I particularly like the fact that the grading criteria are inserted at the start of each TMA and exam, because this practice helps to draw students’ attention to what marking will be based on and what students should take into consideration whilst completing their work. Marking includes comments as per marking criterion such that students do not just see a grade but it is explained to them why they got that grade. If the overall grade and/or grades for separate marking criteria are fairly low, then students are given recommendations on how/what to improve. * Overall, I confirm that the marking criteria and grading scheme are consistently applied across all assessments. Cross-branch marking, or standardisation of marking, has also taken place and is very useful practice. I was in fact impressed by the level and quality of coordination and collaboration across the AOU Egypt and Bahrain branches, and how well the Lebanon branch has worked so far despite the fact that the launch of the course in Lebanon in October 2024 happened under very difficult circumstances. |