

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2010– 2011**

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION***Subject area and awards being examined:***School of:** Biological Sciences**Subject(s):** Anatomy**Programme(s) / Module(s):**

Anatomy in Relation to Medicine

**awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)**

Intercalated B.Med.Sci.

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than 6 weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to [exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

Alternatively you can post your report to:

**Head of Academic Quality and Standards,  
Academic Quality and Standards Team,  
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building,  
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT**

**PART B: COMMENTS FOR THE INSTITUTION ON THE EXAMINATION PROCESS AND STANDARDS*****Matters for Urgent Attention***

*If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box.*

Please try to improve the arrangements for ILL for students authoring papers, projects and dissertations. As far as I can ascertain these are either too expensive or too time consuming. See below.

***Only applicable in first year of appointment***

*Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?*

NA 2nd Year in Post

***For Examiners completing their term of appointment***

*Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School.*

NA

## Standards

**1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award?**

- *The appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*

*Suitable*

- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

*Suitable*

**2. Did the aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?**

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

*Although there is a benchmark for core anatomy appropriate to a first degree in Medicine this is a highly specialised module with rather unusual aims and no benchmark that I am aware of is available.*

**3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs?**

- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*

*Appropriate*

- *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

*More than adequate*

**4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and ILOs?**

- *The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*

*Yes*

- *The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

*See below. The top end is extremely able and produces high quality work. The tail of poor achievement is commendably short.*

**5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum**

*NA*

**6. The nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year**

- *It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.*

*The module on Anatomy Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is well received and innovative and deserves to be given attention.*

**7. The influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching**

- *This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.*

*There is ample evidence of this in the student's projects and on line reports.*

## **The Examination Process**

8. **The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?**

- *Whether external examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

Yes

9. **Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks?**

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes

10. **Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

Yes

11. **Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes. A well chaired meeting reached well debated conclusions in the light of a wide range of well collated evidence.

12. **Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

There were no such cases of relevance to discuss in the provision I was responsible for external examining this year.

### **For Examiners involved in Mentoring Arrangements**

*If you have acted as a mentor to a new external examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements.*

NA

### **Other Comments**

*Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form.*

External Examiners Report on:

**Intercalated B. Med. Sci. "Anatomy in Relation to Medicine".**

Author of Report:

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#### Review of Papers:

I was sent and carefully reviewed draft papers for the Semester 1 examinations in Anatomy these were for BMSC313201 and BMSC313601. I considered these fair and well written. They were set at an appropriately challenging level for students with these interests at this stage. Comments were returned in timely fashion. They contained suggestion. A reply indicated that the suggestions made had been discussed and that some had been implemented.

#### Visit 1:

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011

The venue was meeting room 8.49N in the Worsley Building Leeds University.

I was able to review scripts of 20 students with performances equivalent to 9 1sts, 9 2(i)s, 2 2(ii)s

There were 3 meetings scheduled

- 1) Meeting with current students 10.30-12.30

Synopsis of meeting: A sample of 6 students was generally impressed with the teaching which in their eyes held value for training well beyond obvious career paths such as surgery. Strengths cited included the fair assessment scheme, level of detail, the development of independent learning skills. Staff support when needed was excellent and feedback was strong and timely: the teaching developed critical and analytical skills well. There were those that would like a broader range of anatomy available as options. The pedagogical role of 4th year medical students delivering training to sports scientists in their 1<sup>st</sup> year was widely enjoyed and thought useful. The possibility of extending the delivery to students requiring a greater amount of anatomical knowledge might be more rewarding. Opportunities for networking through the clinical liaison involved, the chance to develop extended report writing skills, the chance to develop original themes and the chance to develop organisational and planning skills were all seen as opportunities made available by the course in its current form. The perceived threats were economic and included affecting adequacy of qualified staff numbers and the cost of cadavers and their ethical and legally controlled management.

Specific recommendation: Students requiring Inter Library Loan references find the current system expensive and unresponsive. Apparently it currently may cost £5 or take a special half day journey to access one item of literature essential for their reports.

- 2) A meeting originally scheduled with Professor Dick Killington (Pro-Dean For learning and Teaching) and Professor Simon Harrison (Faculty Director of Undergraduate learning and Teaching) gave feed-back on the developments envisaged at Faculty level.
- 3) Meeting with teaching staff. Dr Roberts guided a visit to the DR where the quality of the special dissections performed by the students was on display and students demonstrated their knowledge of these.

The remaining time was spent reviewing spreadsheets of marks for: "Advanced Dissection of Head and Neck" and "Principles of Learning and Teaching". These were comprehensive and allowed an assessment of the quantitative aspects of assessment and record keeping. I also accessed student written feedback which reflected well on the staff.

#### Visit 2 including the exam board meeting

Dates 21<sup>st</sup> June and 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Venue Room 9.57, Level 9, Worsley Building

During this visit I participated in

- 1) Examination of a range of student in course written work project reports and online presentations.
- 2) A sample of 12 students exam essays at various levels of performance was assessed. I have not named individual candidates below however the marking corresponded to my assessment and seemed fair. I found that overall the marking was fair and consistent with my view of the appropriate level.

Next I examined all available work (11 items) from a candidate at the bottom of the rank order eventually awarded 2(ii). I would have awarded a slightly higher mark for the project written by this candidate but a change of that order would not have raised the candidate over a grade boundary. One item of submitted work was a blank CD ROM supposed to contain an online presentation which was awarded 0%. Candidates had been specifically told to check these prior to submission and the examiners had no alternative than to give this mark. At the root of this candidate's very variable performances may have been a failure to time manage optimally or to communicate well with staff. I suggest that in future thought be given to ways of identifying such students at an early stage of this one year course.

After this a very good performer's work was sampled. The 2 essays I read were of high quality and deserved the 1<sup>st</sup> class marks awarded. The related project on testicular pain and patterns of branching of the genitofemoral nerve was well worth the 75% mark awarded.

A particularly good student who was subsequently recommended for the award of 3 prizes was a point of focus for my attempt to sample the full range of performance. The clinical anatomy project submitted by this student was quite exceptional. It contained work of publishable quality. It was extensive including reviews of 12 dissections. It also contained a record of three full dissections of the liver and its vascular supply and

*drainage performed by the candidate. The latter were of very high quality and from them were described novel variations in anatomy in an area already well studied because of its importance to liver transplantation. The project was presented on line and in booklet form at a very high standard.*

- a. I also read 5 of this student's 1<sup>st</sup> class exam essay. 3 from Advanced Topics in Medicine Q2,6 & 15 and 2 from Anatomy of the Head and neck Q1 & 3 and these were well worth their marks reaching up to the mid 80s.*
- b. The teaching portfolio was of a high order and revealed an empathic facility for activity design that would appeal to particular groups of students.*
- c. The paper on Anatomy teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> C was deeply researched and considered.*

*Points to be made. The programme leader Sheila Nunn and teachers and students on this course can combine to give real examples of the very best teaching and learning. At its best as in this instance they reach an internationally competitive level.*

*Overall the dissection quality was excellent.*

*Generally a lack of diagrams in essays was a little bit of a disappointment. Nevertheless the overall standard of illustration in the projects was high. The Photoshop transparent overlay technique taught by Dr Roberts was well used in project and on line reports and photographic records were of a high standard and well annotated.*

- 3) Administration was of a high order and as usual much appreciated as it simplified a complex series of tasks for the external examiners.*
- 4) A meeting with the chair of the Special Cases Committee was cancelled as there was no discussion relevant to this provision.*
- 5) The Final exam Board meeting (9.30-12.00 am Room 9.57) was attended and a verbal report was made. There were no boundary issues to discuss and 12- 1<sup>st</sup> Class, 7- 2(i) and 1- 2(ii) degrees were recommended for award. Staff and students are to be congratulated on this excellent performance.*

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External Examiner:

Programme Area: **BSc Anatomy in Relation to Medicine**

Academic Year: **2010/11**

Date of Response: **2 September 2011**

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Dear

I would like to thank you on behalf of the anatomy team for your supervision of our examination process this year, and for your comprehensive report, which has now been forwarded to me by our Teaching Quality and Support Office. Your report has in addition been forwarded to all involved in the anatomy programme and discussed at our most recent anatomy team meeting. I am pleased that you found our administrative arrangements to be of a high order, provision of access to materials and students sufficient for your needs, and that you regard the quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods to be more than adequate.

With respect to the question in the External Examiner's report re matters for urgent attention you commented on the arrangements for inter library loans (ILL). This year is the first time that I am aware of that students have brought this matter to the attention of both the External Examiner and the Programme Leader for Anatomy. You state that the students find the current system expensive and if they cannot obtain the ILL article online they need to take a special half day trip to the British Lending Library at Boston Spa to obtain the document. I have met with the library staff to discuss this matter and have been told that complaints have increased since the cost rose on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 to £5 per article whether it is a book, journal, report or thesis. The cost is however heavily subsidized by the Library: an average request costs the Library approximately £15. To try and reduce the costs for students I suggested to them that they collate a list of articles needed and travel in small groups to Boston Spa where they can photocopy the articles, and providing these are relatively short, photocopying costs should be considerably less than the £5 per ILL to access online. This matter however is cause for concern as the anatomy programme is a research led degree so students require access to journals for all of their taught modules as well as their projects. I have asked that this matter be put on the agenda at the next meeting of the Faculty Undergraduate School Learning and Teaching Committee, so it can be discussed in a wider forum as it affects all level 3 students within the Faculty of Biological Sciences.

I am delighted that under the heading "it would be helpful if you could identify areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination" that you stated that the module on anatomy teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (BMSC3142) is well received and innovative and deserves to be given attention. This was a challenging module to plan and deliver as there was nothing like it within the faculty on which it could be based. It required considerable input from the module leader and other members of the anatomy staff so it is pleasing to receive positive feedback from you. You report that the students enjoyed the module and appreciated the highly detailed feedback. Currently the anatomy students on this compulsory module teach sports scientists and biomedical science students as part of their assessment for this module. As you stated they would however like to teach other students e.g. lower year medical students: this is not currently possible due to the timetabling nature of this and other modules. It is hoped that in the future this module can be modified for other Biomedical Science students to take as I believe it would increase their employability options.

Thank you for your comments concerning your visit in March: some of which have already been addressed in the paragraphs above. We believe that this is a valuable opportunity for you to get a feel for how the students themselves view the course, which is very important to us. Feedback from them, via you, is very useful for our module and course reviews. The anatomy team are aware that the students would like a broader range of anatomy options available to them: these options were increased this year with three advanced topics in anatomy offered and it is hoped to add to these in the future.

We are particularly delighted to hear that the students thought that staff support when needed was excellent and that feedback was strong and timely. It is hoped that we can continue to deliver this level of staff support and feedback to next year's cohort after the retirement of [redacted] in December 2011, as [redacted] has been a highly valued member of the anatomy team to-date.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for your positive approach and strong level of support as our External Examiner for our course: we greatly appreciate the considerable amount time and effort that you have put into it.

Yours sincerely,

Programme Leader

**Faculty of Biological Sciences**

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

26 September 2011

Dear

**EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2010/11: BSc Anatomy in Relation to Medicine**

Firstly many thanks for acting in the role of External Examiner for the Anatomy in relation to Medicine degree programme and for your effort throughout the year - we are very grateful for your input and I'm pleased that you found our administrative and support processes efficient. It is great to see the hard work of staff reflected in the positive comments you have regarding the programme.

Concerning the issue of charges associated with interlibrary loans, we have some suggestions for managing costs to students and as noted in response to your report, this was raised with the library representative at our recent Undergraduate School Student Education Committee. This is an important issue which affects all our students in the Faculty and so we need to pursue this further. I hope to be able to update you on any developments.

I am very pleased you commented so positively on the quality of our final year research projects in anatomy as well as the innovative approaches in the Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century module - staff will be very encouraged by your comments.

Thanks once again for your efforts during the year and I look forward to seeing you in April next year. If you have any queries, please let me know.

With best wishes,

Faculty Director of Undergraduate Student Education