

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
 ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Biological Sciences
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Bioscience
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to 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

No matters for urgent action were identified.

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?

Yes – most useful.

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

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

Programme structure and content are more than adequately appropriate, as are the Intended Learning Outcomes. The standard expected of candidates is high, and correct for a degree at MSc level.

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.*

Compared to other UK courses with which I am familiar, Aims and ILO are well within expected norms. I am not aware of a formal national benchmark that could be applied, but I would not envisage the MSc in Bioscience falling below such a benchmark.

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

I am impressed by the mixture of individual course-work, group work and assessment of research competencies. These appropriately enhance a student's likelihood of reaching the ILO. Student performances are suggestive of a good overall quality; for the specialist module I looked at in some detail (Infection & Immunity) this was also reflected in student feedback.

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

Generally, achievement was high. There were one or two weak students, but there was no indication this reflected the standard of assessment, and some very good student results were seen (incl several Distinctions overall).

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

N/A

6. Please comment on 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.

My first year – but I did note that in the I&I module, student feedback summary statistics have shown year-on-year improvement since 2011. This suggests enhancements and tweaks are working.

7. Please comment on 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.

This is absolutely first rate, and it was clear from talking to students in Sept, and from the feedback data, that this is a valued characteristic of the course.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

I received very good mentorship from my predecessor <>.

9. 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.*

The first year was daunting in prospect only – once I arrived in Leeds and met both the Faculty and Grad School Support staff, everything went very well indeed. The material I was given was more than adequate – (my only problem was lack of time to read it thoroughly before the first day of duties). Although I did not request additional information, I am confident this would be readily available if needed in future years.

10. 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, marking criteria?

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

Yes.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

These were available, but I did not read through prior to the meeting in October. I will do this better in 2014.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

This material was both comprehensive, and comprehensible. The breadth of access was very good – course-work and project reports from any student about whose assessment grades we had any doubt could be examined in the round very effectively.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Appropriate, fitting with available faculty expertise.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

More than satisfactory – highly professional.

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

Yes, two students in particular were considered very carefully by both Faculty and Externals.

Other comments

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

A thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding first year. I look forward to my contribution in 2014.

**Faculty of Biological Sciences
Graduate School**

University of Leeds
Garstang Building
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

4 December 2013

Dear

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2012/13: MSc Infection and Immunity

Thank you very much for your favourable report on the above course. The module team are pleased with your supportive comments and will strive to maintain the high standards of the teaching provision and student experience that you highlight in your report. We appreciate that acting as external examiner is an additional call on your time and we are grateful for your input. We look forward to welcoming you as External Examiner in 2014.

Yours sincerely,

Director of Taught Graduate Student Education