

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

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION*Subject area and awards being examined:*

School of: Education	Subject(s):
Programme(s) / Module(s): EDUC 5811M; EDUC 5812M	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) PG Cert Provision for Children with Developmental Disorders

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.

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.

N/A

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

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.

N/A

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.*

YES. The aims and ILOs are entirely commensurate with the level of the award – a post graduate certificate. The ILOs range from simple description of developmental disorders right through to evaluation of approaches to assessment and intervention planning. The programme encourages consideration of wider conceptual issues, drawing across all four developmental disorders covered in the course. It also allows for students to reflect on and evaluate practical issues relating to assessment and support in schools. The standards set within the programme are appropriately challenging for the level of the award.

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.*

YES. The aims and ILOs are similar to those at my own Institution and others that I am familiar with at this level.

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.*

Each of the modules is assessed by coursework (6000-word essay). A range of essays titles was provided and were appropriate to the ILOs, except I felt that some of the set titles lend themselves more to critical analysis than others. Students also had the opportunity to submit two 3000-word pieces of coursework. Again, I feel that this might restrict the extent to which they could engage with the material at a deeper level and demonstrate evaluation and critical analysis. The assessment process seemed to be very thorough. Marking standards were consistent and clearly in line with the marking criteria. There was evidence of internal moderation, although I was not clear exactly how this was organised. Marking was consistent and the classification of awards appropriate.

The material I received describing the modules and the examples of student work I inspected indicated a very high quality of teaching. The teaching material is interesting, up to date and obviously taught by an expert in the field. It covers a good balance of theoretical and practical issues and in their coursework some students have demonstrated excellent understanding, criticality and an ability to apply knowledge to their own practice.

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.*

The standards achieved on the modules (in terms of the mean and range of scores) are comparable to similar courses at my own institution and at others that I am familiar with. At the top end there is some truly excellent work.

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. 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.

N/A. This is my first year as External Examiner.

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 a very clear influence of recent and relevant research on the curriculum. The modules are delivered by an expert in the field, who draws on relevant research from the UK and World wide. Evidence for this is seen in the module descriptions, the reading lists provided and in the coursework completed by students.

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. I was provided with all the relevant University documentation, including codes of practice on assessment and marking criteria.

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. I had access to module handbooks, coursework titles and reading lists.

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

YES. . I had access to a sufficient number of student scripts across the full range of marks.

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

YES.

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

YES.

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.

N/A

Other Comments

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

The courses that I examine clearly provide a thorough, interesting and up to date learning experience for students and they respond with some excellent pieces of coursework, demonstrating sound understanding of the field and good evaluative skills. Full and useful feedback is provided on student work, with a clear indication of strengths and areas for improvement.

It was interesting and useful to have the opportunity to meet with students on the course. It is clear that they appreciate the high level of support and advice from the teaching team.

In the mark sheets sent to me I would like to know which essay question each student attempted, so that I can see the range of marks achieved for each question.

19 January 2012

Dear

Thank you for your work in examining the modules relating to Provision for Children with Developmental Disorders for the postgraduate awards in the School of Education during the Academic Year 2010/11.

The School is pleased that you considered the student work indicated a 'very high quality of teaching' with the material being up to date and taught by someone who is an expert in the field. It is also pleasing that you believe the course covers a good balance of theoretical and practical issues with students demonstrating excellent understanding and criticality.

You raised a few issues that require our attention:

First, you queried the option open to students to submit two 3000 words assignments, rather than one of 6000. This was offered to allow students to be able to address (over the two modules) all four developmental disorders. But in the light of your comments and the fact that no student this year took up this option, we have decided to withdraw this alternative mode of assessment.

Second, you asked for the mark sheet to indicate which question had been attempted as not all students enter the title. This information will be provided in the future.

Third, you were not clear how internal moderation was organised. Full details of the School policy on double marking and moderation can be found in the School of Education's Code of Practice on Assessment, a copy of which you should have received in January 2011 and November 2011. Our current practice is to select a sample of scripts for second marking which comprises all fails and 15% of the total number of assignments submitted. The duty of the second marker is to make an independent assessment of the assignments and to consider the first marker's grading and feedback comments. If there is disagreement a face to face meeting takes place in order to reach an agreed position on the final mark awarded to the candidate.

Finally, you noted that some of the assignment titles lend themselves to more critical analysis than others. This is a deliberate practice by the tutor concerned as there is a wide range of experience and expertise in the group. The range of questions allows students to choose one that best fits their interest, skill and knowledge. However, in the future, every effort will be made to design questions such that all students can fully demonstrate the extent of their critical and analytic abilities.

The school is extremely grateful for the time, effort and skill you bring to the examination process and we look forward to future collaboration with you.

Yours sincerely

Head of School