

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

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

<b>School of:</b> Education <b>Programme(s) / Module(s):</b> Teacher training programmes	<b>Subject(s):</b> Mathematics Secondary <b>awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)</b> PGCE
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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.*

No

***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?*

***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.*

Generally well managed if sometimes a little hectic. Clear evidence of improvement over the three years

## 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.*

The standards at Leeds match those of other universities offering similar programmes

### 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

### 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.*

At present the four assignments cover an appropriate range of issues but at the lower end the depth of focus can be limiting. The students not achieving post graduate level in attempting to write academic assignments tend to miss the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and development or to explore subject issues in depth. The over reliance on finding a relevant quote rather than synthesising the views of authors seems to give priority to the traditional view of academic writing rather than that of reflecting on practice. The move from four assignments to three could prove useful in supporting a shift of attention provide the relevant guidance is provided

### 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 the standards are appropriate for a programme of this nature. However, students' knowledge of mathematics pedagogy is relatively limited

In their writings there is evidence of considering the surface features of pedagogy and a lack of an in depth focus on significant or critical issues. The best students write academically impressive accounts and do demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and practice. The programme perhaps, needs to aim for more of the middle and lower attaining students to be doing this.

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

Students at Leeds attainment in teaching match those of similar students on other PGCE programmes. There is evidence of strong relationships between the university provision and school based experience and support. It is clear that the support in the university is very practical and appreciated by the students. Students are relatively uncritical of the practices and provisions in school. The rituals in schools such as writing short-term learning objectives, using smiley faces and delivery of lessons at a fast pace tend to be accepted without considering effectiveness.

### 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 link between professional studies and methods has been considerably enhanced. Students appreciated both the structure and content of both modules. Students also appreciated that the assignments and school based tasks supported making links and seeing the relevance of the programme content

### 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*

This is very difficult to manage on such a short programme of initial teacher training. The students are supported in writing well honed assignments which demonstrate academic rigour, links to generic pedagogic research and fluency in the writing. Many

students, however, have a superficial knowledge of subject pedagogy or subject pedagogic research and tend to see schools in a relatively uncritical light. Students appreciate the support provide in developing the skills required in becoming effective teachers and it is clear that the maths team at Leeds provides very professional and demanding methods programme that links well to generic theories in education.

It is also clear that the programme team recognise the need for change and are ambitious in their expectations for the medium-term development of the programme

### ***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

**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.*

### ***Other Comments***

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

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

10 October 2011

Dear

Thank you for your report and your support for our PGCE programme over the last few years. In particular, I would like to say thank you for the encouragement you have offered my colleagues over the past year with respect to the development of the course.

I would like to review some of the points under consideration in your report.

Firstly, I would like to address the point made in the past about the number of assignments and your comment this year:

*The move from four assignments to three could prove useful in supporting a shift of attention provided the relevant guidance is provided.*

As you will remember the process of changing assignments is lengthy but this has allowed a working party to operate and design the new assignment criteria to help ensure relevance and engagement.

*In their writings there is evidence of considering the surface features of pedagogy and a lack of an in depth focus on significant or critical issues. The best students write academically impressive accounts and do demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and practice. The programme perhaps, needs to aim for more of the middle and lower attaining students to be doing this.*

*...It is also clear that the programme team recognise the need for change and are ambitious in their expectations for the medium-term development of the programme*

These comments are welcomed and as you have noted:

*The link between professional studies and methods has been considerably enhanced.*

We are developing the EPS programme to be more engaging, both in school and in Method sessions, we expect these issues to be addressed.

Overall, further comments you offered in the examination board meeting on the improvements observed with the EPS programme were timely and the programme will continue to be developed in the same direction with more emphasis placed on the enquiry-based learning tasks and discussion in Method sessions.

Finally, as with past reports the strength of the Partnership was recognised:

*There is evidence of strong relationships between the university provision and school based experience and support.*

We are encouraged by these comments and continue to strengthen our Partnership relationship. You will recall a big focus of the coming year will be surrounding mentor training, particularly, using school-based sessions.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Hayward', written in a cursive style.

Professor Geoff Hayward  
Head of School of Education