

**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:	Lifelong Learning
Subject(s):	<i>Interdisciplinary Science</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<i>ISFY</i> <i>EEFY</i>
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

**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](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 areas require urgent attention

**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*

## 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 Programmes' aims and intended learning outcomes are well considered and appropriate for preparation of students for study in Higher Education.

**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.*

There are no official national subject benchmarks for pre-degree level, but the aims and ILOs are comparable with courses elsewhere nationally and appropriate for students progression.

**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.*

There are some excellent assessments demonstrating a good range of assessment style and some innovative practice such as the new assessment for students to design exam questions. Note the moderator's comments regarding level and differentiation of the assessment in Maths 0040, however.

**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 academic standards demonstrated by the students indicate that the course does an excellent job of preparing students for progression to degree-level study. This was a good cohort of students who are likely to do well as they progress.

**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.*

There has been considerable improvement as the programme has migrated further into the University allowing greater consistency of approach across the module which will continue into the next year.

**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.*

The Programme is considering expanding the research skills approach by including project work to enable students to develop their induction into the community of practice of a research-intensive university such as Leeds. This is to be encouraged.

## 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**

N/A

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.

I had sufficient material to make the required judgements

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.

I received appropriate documentation.

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?

I received draft examination papers and was able to comment and make suggestions for minor changes.

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?

There was an excellent range of assessed work available for me to have confidence in the standard of student work. The scripts were clearly marked and annotated including second marking/ moderation being explicit. There were some particularly good examples of moderation e.g. for the Maths 0113 module.

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

N/A

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?

The administrative arrangements were excellent, I attended the meeting and am satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes – there was clear evidence that mitigating circumstances and medical evidence had been considered appropriately.

Other comments

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

There were some particularly good examples of feedback to students by some of the tutors particularly the Maths 0113 and Physics 0116 modules in the EEFY programme and this is to be commended.

<>

25<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Dear <>

### **External Examiner's Reports for 2012-13**

As usual at this time of year, we have been reflecting carefully on the feedback that we receive from our External Examiners and from student surveys. In the light of this, I am now writing to each of our examiners to respond to the observations that you make in your report and to give you a broader sense of our plans for 2013-14.

Thank you for your reports as External Examiner for our Science Foundation Year Programmes and for Preparation for Higher Education. We appreciate the relevance of the experience that you bring to this role and your thoughtful reflections both in conversation with programme staff and more formally in your reports. It is helpful to us to have your external perspective at this time of development for each programme with PHE evolving to give greater emphasis to the subject modules, Earth and Environmental Sciences completing its inaugural year and Interdisciplinary Science re-cast in readiness for the transfer of all teaching to the LLC in 2013-14.

Your reports suggest that you continue to be satisfied with all three foundation year programmes and find them to be comparable to those in other universities, delivered to appropriate standards and learning outcomes and with a sufficient variety of assessments to enable students to demonstrate their achievements. It is good to note your comment that the programmes all make "an excellent job of preparing students for progression to degree level study." We are also encouraged by the areas which you commend as good practice: examples of excellent feedback, the use of reflective blogs in PHE, the innovative assignment in Interdisciplinary Science in which students design exam questions and the introduction of research skills on all programmes through project work at level 0.

We shall continue to work on the areas that you highlight in your report for further development. For PHE, your concerns about an assignment opening students to plagiarism will be addressed in re-design of that element and we shall be careful to observe the appropriate protocols for moderation in what the University is now calling "check marking". The Programme Team is also considering your observation on instances of over-long feedback, bearing in mind the developmental focus of the programme. As for the Sciences, our main concern is to ensure that Earth and Environment continues to build on its successful first year and that Interdisciplinary Science, delivered wholly by the University for the first time in 2013-14, yields the

benefits that we are seeking, and which you have encouraged, in terms of its fitness as a rigorous and supportive introduction to science learning at the University.

Looking more broadly, I enclose for your information a summary of feedback from our other External Examiners. As you will see, your positive evaluation of our learning and teaching, feedback and support for students is shared across the range of examiners. Where points have been raised for further development, these are not only being addressed within the relevant programme but are also implemented, wherever appropriate, across our provision as a whole.

Feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Survey continues to show a very positive picture. We are particularly pleased to note steady improvement in satisfaction scores in virtually all areas for both surveys and, with it, the suggestion that high overall satisfaction is well grounded in students' experience across all aspects of their learning. Please find enclosed a copy of our action plan for 2013-14 which summarises this feedback and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

You will see that one such development is the introduction of newly formulated assessment criteria and feedback forms. We have developed these in careful consultation with staff and students and following a short trial that involved blind re-marking of a sample of assignments that had already been processed through our exam boards. We hope that the new approach will be more accessible for students and provide them with a clearer sense of what is being sought from them and how they are being graded. Please find details of the scheme enclosed along with the explanatory notes that have been published to students and staff. Naturally, we shall be reflecting carefully on how this works out in practice and would welcome any feedback that you can offer as an External Examiner. If you have observations during the course of the year ahead of your annual report do please raise them with <>, <> or <> or contact our Director of Student Education, <>, via <> or <>.

Thank you, once again, for your work on our behalf as External Examiner. It is invaluable to have such constructive feedback and we look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

<>  
Director for Lifelong Learning,  
<>