

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

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

School of:	Lifelong Learning	Subject(s): Preparation for Study in Higher Education
		awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)
Programme(s) / Module(s):		
LLLLC0164 Basic ICT Skills for HE		
LLLLC1325 Introducing Psychology		
LLLLC1333 Academic and Personal Development		
LLLLC1327 ICT for Higher Education		
LLLLC1215 Applied Social Studies		
LLLLC1347 Human Biology		
LLLLC1326 Statistics for Data		

Names of other examiners responsible for these subjects, programmes or awards (if any):

Name and home institution/affiliation of examiner:

PART B: EXAMINATION PROCESS AND STANDARDS

The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Was this material sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?

Yes / No

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?

Yes / No

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?
(only applicable in first year of appointment)

Yes / No

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

Yes / No

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

Yes / No

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

Yes / No

Do you consider that the programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award?

Yes / No

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

Yes / No

Were the assessment methods appropriate to the ILOs?

Yes / No

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

Yes / No

PART C: DETAILED COMMENTS FOR THE INSTITUTION

In this section, you are asked to provide more detailed comments for the use of the School or University. You are encouraged to address in more detail the points listed below. This list is not exhaustive and your comments on other matters will be welcome.

Please comment in the box below on:

- *The appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;*
- *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 quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance;*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration;*
- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards*
- *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 coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*
- *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.

ILOs The learning outcomes for the programme are relevant, appropriate, well-designed and articulated. The new ICT for Higher Education module challenges the students well, academically. This year I was particularly impressed with the new Introducing Psychology and the Statistics for Data modules. They offered excellent preparation for study in HE in these and related subjects. They offered good stretch for the more able students.

Comparability Academic standards compare well in relation to national benchmarks and FHEQ levels.

Standards demonstrated by students The quality of students' work is good in the main. The range includes a few fails (resits) as well as some excellent work at the higher end particularly in Psychology.

Strengths and weaknesses of student cohort

Weaknesses identified early on in Autumn term assessments had clearly been acted upon by the end of the summer term amongst those students whose work I have seen. Early somewhat 'forgiving' marks at the lower end were therefore entirely justified as careful formative feedback and further teaching and learning support clearly paid dividend as indicated by rigorously awarded higher marks obtained by those students by the end of the programme.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to excellent. The advice I gave last year on ways to enhance the ICT module had been taken on board in the design of the new module. I would like to commend the range of most interesting literature review topics chosen for investigation. The biology module was consistently good. Especially commendable was the work of the Psychology tutor whose assessment design was good and whose formative feedback was nothing short of exemplary. It was clear, fully engaged with student work as it progressed, detailed, specific and actionable. Feedback on the Academic and Personal Development was also good.

Standards appropriate to award or award element

The standard of work of all students who passed is appropriate to the modules being undertaken and the standard expected is appropriate to the award or award element given.

Design and structure of assessment methods, marking, moderation and classification

The design and structure of assessment is good to very good and methods are valid. Marking and moderation are detailed, careful and constructive and enhance the reliability of marks awarded.

Access to course documentation Communications from course director and course administrator have been excellent throughout the year. All appropriate and necessary course documentation relating to the programme was sent at the start of the academic year. Samples of moderated work together with the range of marks being attributed have been sent at intervals throughout the year.

Policies and procedures All present and correct.

Nature and effectiveness of enhancements to programme since previous year

Introduction of new modules LLLC1327; LLLC1325 and LLLC 1326 has considerably improved and enhanced the programme.

Areas of good practice worthy of wider dissemination

The Psychology tutor's formative feedback exemplars could be used in the training of any new teaching staff joining the team.

Please continue onto another page if appropriate.

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.

None.

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

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

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.

N/A

Dear

External Examiner's Report for 2010-11

Over the last few months we have been reviewing reports from our External Examiners along with feedback from students, including the results of the National Student Survey of finalists and the University's own Programme Survey which covers those in other years of study. I am now writing to each Examiner both to respond to reports individually and to give an overview of the outcomes of this annual review.

Before turning to this, I would like to thank you not just for your final year with us as an External Examiner for Preparation for Higher Education, but for the outstanding support that you have provided in this role throughout your period of appointment. You have, yourself, consistently been a model of excellence in the feedback that you have given. We have been able to rely on you for well founded and precisely stated judgements both of what we do well and what we should be changing and we feel that the programme has benefitted directly from this constructive approach. It has been especially valuable to have you in post over a period of significant staffing change for PHE and I know that <<>> has been greatly encouraged by your honest, constructive feedback and wise counsel.

We are pleased to find that the programme continues to be characterised by strengths which you observed in previous reports. You note that standards compare appropriately with national benchmarks and that learning outcomes are "relevant, appropriate, well-designed and articulated". You also judge our approaches to teaching, learning and assessment to be never less than "good", sometimes "very good" or "excellent" and note that "marking and moderation are detailed, careful and constructive".

As always, it is especially encouraging to find that there are areas of practice which you wish to commend. It is good to see that new modules have strengthened the programme, whether in the revamped approach to ICT, which reflects your recommendations of previous years, or in the new psychology and data modules. Individual tutors have been especially heartened by your positive comments. Our psychology tutor, who is leaving us shortly, will take with him your endorsement of his formative feedback as "nothing short of exemplary" and we have been able to build-in a long handover period to his, highly committed, successor which we hope will sustain this good practice. Quite rightly, your positive comments leave us with the continued challenge of sustaining and, wherever possible, improving the quality of our provision.

Moving on from PHE to the LLC as a whole, I enclose a copy of our action plan in response to feedback on 2010-11 which summarises the key points raised by students and External Examiners and sets out our main areas for further work in the current year. You will see that student feedback through the University's Programme Survey gives a positive picture that is consistent with all previous surveys. The low NSS scores for this year are a direct result of the way in which the national formulae for selecting students has skewed the sampling of part-time programmes. The result is that the data reflect the views of just twelve students, at least two of whom are misplaced with the LLC since their qualitative feedback raises issues linked with subjects that do not feature in any of our programmes.

I also enclose for your information a summary of feedback from our other External Examiners. As you will see, your positive evaluation of the quality of our learning and teaching, feedback and student support 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 will also be taken account of, wherever appropriate, across the Centre's provision as a whole.

I would like, once again, to thank you for your outstanding work on our behalf as External Examiner. It has been invaluable to have such thorough and constructive feedback over the last four years and I hope that you feel your share of professional pride in the positive impact that this has had on PHE and its students.

Yours