

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning
Subject(s):	Education/ Learning Support
Programme(s) / Module(s):	B.A. (Hons) Learning and Teaching Foundation Degree Learning and Teaching
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	B.A. + FD

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

None

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?

N/A

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

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 intended learning outcomes for the programme are compatible with those with which I am familiar on other programmes in other institutions and the standards are appropriate for the awards.

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.*

The aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme are comparable with similar programmes at other institutions with which I am familiar. They are clearly in line with QAA standards and expectations.

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.*

In two samples provided for me at the end of semesters 1 and 2 I have had opportunity to read a considerable number of scripts and to see presentation material on computer (see attached sheet). The design and structure of the assessment methods is a strength of the programmes and shows good variety from presentations, reports, blogs, essays and group work.

The student performance suggests that excellent standards of teaching and learning are in operation.

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.*

Student work was broadly compatible with others at the same level in other institutions although there was variation across different modules (see attached comments). Some students perform extremely well, others less so, which is what one could expect on a programme such as this which draws practitioners from the field. The quality of feedback is almost always high and students are given clear targets to improve. The moderation process works well and was in evidence within the samples.

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.

I would, once again, commend the team on the variety of assessments and the quality of feedback. The evidence of group work presentations was particularly good.

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.

All of the assignments demand some level of research by the students and this is especially true at level 3. Students generally make good use of their work settings to link practice and theory and the blogs which they produce allow them to also use personal experience (both within and outwith work) to hone their reflective skills. There was some evidence in Level 3 work that students were struggling to evaluate research

methodology (see attached comments) and this might be an area where the programme team wish to focus on developing other strategies.

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

This year I have acted as a mentor to two new external examiners. I have been contacted by both of them for advice and have been able to provide this.

The Examination/Assessment Process

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 material was sufficient and it was especially helpful to have video evidence of group work and presentations.

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.*

All appropriate documentation was sent

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?

There are no examinations on this programme. The assessments are well thought-out and help the students to link practice to theory. I am particularly impressed with the variety of assessment methods and with the use of things such as blogs and learning contracts to help students to organise their assessments and hone their reflective skills.

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?

The material sent by post at the end of semester 1, and available on the day of the Examination Board from semester 2, was sufficient for me to have confidence in evaluating student work. All the work was annotated and accompanied by feedback sheets and, where applicable, moderation paperwork.

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

I saw work from a wide range of students but only one Extended Research Project (which was excellent). I assume that this is the assessment that might elsewhere be called a dissertation?

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 and I was able to attend the Board of Examiners which was efficiently organised. I was satisfied with all the recommendations of the Board.

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

No medical evidence was provided and I was given notice of mitigating circumstances where these were applicable.

Other comments

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

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28th November 2012

Dear <>,

External Examiner's Report for 2011-12

Over the last few months we have been reflecting on the feedback that we have received on 2011-12 from our students, teaching staff and External Examiners. I am now writing to each Examiner to respond to reports individually and to give an overview of the outcomes of this annual review process.

We are pleased to see that your overall impression of our Learning and Teaching provision remains positive and that you find the programmes to be comparable to those in other institutions and taught to appropriate standards. It is encouraging to read your comments on the design and structure of assessment methods which you identify as a strength of the programmes and describe as "well-thought out", helpful to students in linking practice to theory and impressive in their variety. You also commend the quality of feedback, which is "almost always high" and provides students with "clear targets to improve", and note that "student performance suggests that excellent standards of teaching and learning are in operation." Finally, we are glad to find that administrative arrangements were "excellent" from your perspective and that you have confidence in our management of assessment, examination and moderation processes.

In section 7 of your report you note that all assignments require some level of research by students and that students generally make effective use of their work-settings to link practice and theory. You observe, however, that in some level 3 work students "were struggling to evaluate research methodology" and recommend that we seek to develop other strategies for helping students to address this challenge. This is a concern that has already been identified by <> and which <> will look to address through revisions to teaching and assessment on the Researching the Sector module.

Moving beyond the Learning and teaching programmes, please find enclosed 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 Externals for all of our programmes. 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.

Feedback from our students through the NSS and the University's own Programme Survey, which covers those in other years of study, continues to give a positive picture. As you may recall from my letter last year, NSS scores for 2010-11 were based on a very small and flawed sample of respondents and we are pleased to see that rectifying this technical problem for 2011-12 has elicited feedback that is consistent with previous years for the NSS and all years of the Programme Survey. Please find enclosed a copy of our Action Plan which summarises feedback from students, along with some of the key points from External Examiners, and identifies our main areas for further work in the current year.

I should like to close by thanking you for all the work that you have undertaken during the year as our External Examiner for Learning and Teaching. We appreciate the wealth of experience that you bring to this role and the care with which you have reviewed students' work and given us feedback. In particular, we would like to thank you for the additional time that you have invested in providing us with a report on the work that you have reviewed from each module. It is invaluable to have an external perspective at this level of detail and I know that <> and <> team have benefitted from your thoughtful and trenchant observations.

Yours sincerely,

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Director for Lifelong Learning/Head of Centre