

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

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

School of: Continuing Education Programme(s) / Module(s): Cert HE Learning and Teaching Cert HE FD Learning and Teaching Foundation Degree BA (Hons) Learning and Teaching B.A. (Hons)	Subject(s): Education/Learning Support awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)
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Name and home institution/affiliation of examiner:

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.

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?

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.*

The aims and learning objectives of the programme are compatible with those with which I am familiar on other programmes in other institutions. The breadth of subjects covered allows students to follow a diverse range of interests relating to the subject matter.

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.*

In two distinct samples I have had opportunity to read a considerable number of scripts (see attached sheet). The design and structure of the assessment methods is a strength of the programmes reviewed, with good variety in evidence from presentations, reports and essays through to artefacts and group work. Particularly impressive are the reflective blogs which allow students to interact and to link theory to practice.

I have only one concern in relation to assessment and this is that students are sometimes not rigorous in anonymising their workplaces or the people within them; for example, they may do so in the main body of their work but leave appendices or write acknowledgements which then name the setting. This is a minor issue but could cause problems for the university if any sensitive information is included in the work.

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. Some students perform extremely well, others less so. The quality of feedback is generally high and students are given clear targets to aim for. The moderation process works particularly well and any problems or inconsistencies in marking are addressed prior to the final mark being agreed.

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.

As this is my first year I am unable to comment on any improvements. I would, however, commend the team on the variety of assessments, the quality of feedback and the effectiveness of the moderation process.

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.

Almost all of the assignments demand some level of research by the students and this is especially true at level 3. Students' success in this very much reflects their own ability with some undertaking very effective primary research to inform their work whilst others use only secondary sources. Students generally make good use of their work settings to link practice and theory.

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.*

The material was sufficient

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.*

All appropriate documentation was sent

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

Sufficient assessed work was made available

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

All arrangements were satisfactory

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.

Please see attached sheet for detailed comments about the samples seen in March 2011 and June 2011.

Work sampled March 2011:

Module code LLLC 1308 Assignment 2:

Some good student work on a wide range of subjects. Good tutor feedback but I absolutely agree with the moderator who suggests that much more guidance needs to be given re referencing.

All marks agreed although I feel that 38% was very generous for one student.

Module code LLLC 2219 Assignments 1 and 2

I really enjoyed reading these – they were fascinating . I thought some students had done outstanding work for Assignment 2.

Module code LLLC 1202 Assignments 1 and 2

Good student work and some excellent tutor feedback both on scripts and on feedback sheets. All marks agreed.

Module code LLLC 1308 Assignment 3

Some very good student work which shows growing confidence with reflection. I agree with the Moderator that opportunities were lost in feedback to focus on referencing – clearly still an area where students need to up their game. All marks agreed.

Module code LLLC 3946 Assignment 1

My heart sank a little when I saw the range of marks in this sample as I felt sure that they would be too generous. In truth they were exactly in line with the quality of the work which was very good indeed. The feedback was very clear and gave each student good, solid guidance on how to progress.

Module code LLLC 2075

There was only one assignment in this sample so I assume that this is an intercalation or similar. The work was satisfactory and the mark of 48% a good reflection of the standard. Feedback was excellent.

Module code LLLC 3948 Assignment 1

Some good student work but grammar, spelling and punctuation are a problem here (and in other assignments) and I agree with the Moderator that opportunities were lost in feedback to focus on these – especially the grammar. All marks agreed.

Module code LLLC 2223 Assignments 1 and 2

Some good student work and some very high quality feedback targeted to help students to progress. I really enjoyed reading these; (I was particularly interested in the student who identified the feelings of inadequacy when other students were asked to help her out with an answer. We all use this technique and it was quite a shock to read from the student perspective about how damaging it could be). All marks agreed.

Module code LLLC 2204 Assignments 1 and 2

A good set of assignments with some good student work. The feedback sheets for the seminar presentation were easy to follow and it was clear how the marks had been derived (not easy with written feedback on a more practical task). All marks agreed.

Module code LLLC 3948 Assignment 2

This was easy and interesting to read and the feedback is really excellent and helpful. I think that 64% for one student is a little generous in comparison to others in the group. I wasn't sure if the students actually physically presented their poster to each other as well as handing it in? If so, then the more generous mark could be attributable to good oral presentation skills. I was impressed with the range of topics which students had chosen.

Module code LLLC 1309 Assignments 1 and 2

I read these assignments particularly carefully as there had clearly been a disagreement between the markers and the moderator. They were difficult to examine as they seem to vary so hugely that it isn't clear to an outsider what criteria have been used. Assignment 1 (the Learning Contract) was fine and I am happy to agree all the marks. The Project Assignment is, however, difficult. Word counts varied considerably; some students had included a literature review, others had not. Some wrote about their methodology, others barely touched it. Yet the marks did not readily connect to the effort or content. I am clear, however, that the fail grade is fully justified.

Work sampled June 2011:

Module LLLC3942

All marks agreed but a concern that so much referencing was still poor for level 3. This was, however, identified in feedback.

Module LLC2231

All marks agreed – excellent feedback to students

Module LLLC3093 (resubmission)

Mark agreed – severe problems relating to an understanding of English

Module LLLC3091 (resubmissions)

Marks agreed; the students had clearly not followed the assignment brief

Module LLLC3949

Some outstanding student work seen, especially one student who had used a very broad range of literature and another who had undertaken a rigorous debate on an unusual subject. All marks agreed

Module LLLC3951

This was the only module where I had a concern. I felt that the marks were generous and that the feedback lacked the clarity seen in other modules, especially in identifying targets for students. The moderation process had commended the marker but I found the comments less helpful than on other feedback sheets.

Module LLLC2226

All marks agreed. Exemplary feedback to students in evidence.

Module LLLC2202

All marks agreed. This was a little difficult to assess as an External Examiner as it was a presentation but the feedback was very clear.

Module LLLC3952

This module was interesting in that the spread of marks was unusual with several very low marks and several very high marks. The marks were all agreed and the feedback was excellent but it is clearly a group which has two distinct levels of student achievement.

Module LLLC1307

All marks agreed. Some very good student work in evidence.

Module LLLC1323

All marks agreed. Very clear feedback from the assessor.

Module LLLC2201

All marks agreed. Some students had clearly struggled with this module but the feedback was clear and targeted for improvement.

Module LLLC3945 Assignment 2

This was a fascinating assessment and the students had risen to the challenge. Two students had produced particularly impressive resources and managed to do so without falling into the trap of neglecting theory in a largely practical task.

Module LLLC1311 Assignment 1

All marks agreed. One student's work made me laugh with sympathy! Her work was excellent especially in her reflections in relation to emotional intelligence. I felt that the feedback was generally of a very high standard but that some citation errors could have had more emphasis.

June 2011

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 for the work that you have undertaken during your first year as our External Examiner for Learning and Teaching programmes. We appreciate the depth of experience that you bring to this role and the constructive feedback that you have provided, not only in your formal report, but also in your very thorough and detailed commentary on the assignments that you have reviewed during the year. I know that <<>> has found this particularly helpful in discussions with her programme team.

It is very encouraging to see that you have formed such a positive initial impression of our Learning and Teaching programmes. We note that you find the learning outcomes and standards to be compatible with those elsewhere and that you judge assessment procedures to be satisfactory. It is especially good to find that the design and structure of assessments strike you as areas of strength and to note your observation that reflective blogs were "particularly impressive" in allowing students to interact and link theory and practice. Your overall commendation of the programme team for "the variety of assessments, the quality of feedback and the effectiveness of the moderation process" is very welcome and we shall certainly seek to sustain and, wherever possible, improve these positive features of the programme.

Your one recommendation for further action concerns student assignments that fail to be consistent in maintaining the anonymity of research subjects through the entire text. This contravenes the requirements of the LLC's research ethics policy and we shall, in future, alert students to the dangers of inadvertently revealing sources in references or acknowledgements. We have also agreed that where anonymity is not properly maintained in future, assignments will be returned to students for correction.

Moving beyond Learning and Teaching provision 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 work on our behalf as External Examiner. It is invaluable to have such thorough and constructive feedback.

Yours