

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:

Foundation Degree in Professional Studies in Family support
BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies

Subject(s):

*See below*Programme(s) /
Module(s):Module: LLLC1083 - the development of Child Welfare
Module: Child welfare research policy and practice
Module: Managing the external Environment
Module: management and leadership
Module: Academic skills in family support
Module: Safeguarding Children
Module: Child and family Health module
Module: Violent and sexual offending young people
Module: Child Welfare in Early Years
Module: Advanced work based learning in family support 2210Awards (e.g.
BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies

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?

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

This is my second year as external examiner to this programme and I continue to be impressed with the work of the students and staff alike. This is an important applied practice programme with strong relevance to workers in the field of family support. Designed to meet the needs of 'return learners' and 'latecomers' to education it fits well with those wishing to complete the programme on a part-time study basis. It is also still very obvious that the success of the programme is dependent on the commitment of the course director and associate director both of whom remain stalwart. The programme is fit for purpose and very much continues to fill a gap in the market of applied social science with specific emphasis family support.

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 content of the curriculum of the programme is rich and fit for purpose in terms of an applied course of this nature and the specific needs of the target student population. The learning outcomes set for student are appropriate and fair, given the academic qualification on offer. In terms of the governance of the work of students, the marking and moderation system is excellent – feedback to students respectful, constructive fair and (hopefully) helpful. There is strong evidence that both the marking sheets feedback and moderating descriptors are being utilized. (No Change in my view from last year).

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 programme meets national standards and having reviewed similar education programmes elsewhere in the UK and internationally, I am very happy that the programme is of the required standard in every respect. In fact I would recommend that the course team consider attaining a quality assurance award for the programme given the innovative nature of the course.

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.*

The assessment methods are very fair and marking with extensive comments provided to students as well as fair and transparent moderation mechanisms.

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.*

Overall ,the academic standards of students work are commendable, particularly given the rich content of knowledge and practice experience that students bring to the programme. Having said this, some issues of presentation of written work by some students presents continues to be an on-going issue. The course team are proactive in addressing this matter.

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

Given that students utilise their work contexts as practice placement, there is no clinical practice component relevant to the programme on offer.

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.

Last year I commented that some consideration of consolidating theoretical underpinnings in family support might be a useful addition to the programme. For example, greater inclusion of social

ecology theory, social capital, social support and resilience as composite to family support practice might bring some added value to curriculum. There is some movement towards creating this but I would recommend this be enhanced if possible.

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.

There is evidence that current research is being utilised by students in their written work and in the teaching content provided by lecturers. Similarly, the action research dissertations undertaken by students are of high quality and provide a current relevance to the field of scrutiny.

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

Not applicable

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.*

Yes

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.*

Yes

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?

Yes

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?

Yes

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

Yes

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?

Yes

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

Yes

Other comments

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

From completion of my second year I send my congratulations and well done to students on your achievements; and to the full staff team well done on delivering an excellent and much needed programme in a challenging environment and pressurised time schedule.

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25th November 2013

Dear <>,

External Examiner's Report 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 second report as External Examiner of our Child and Family Studies Programmes. We very much 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. I know that <> and <> value your continued support and the stimulus of reflecting with you on the developing research and practice within the field.

Your report suggests that the programmes continue to manifest the strengths that you observed last year. It is good to note your endorsement of the relevance of the curriculum, the appropriateness of standards and integrity of assessment processes. We are encouraged by your appreciation of the value of the provision for our target constituencies and its wider significance as an applied practice programme in the field of family support. We note, too, your particular commendation of the "respectful, constructive, fair and (hopefully) helpful feedback" on students work and your praise for the dedication of the Programme Team. Colleagues will, I am sure, be encouraged by your appreciation, not only of their own endeavours, but also of the achievements that students are able to accomplish through the course.

We shall continue to work on the areas that you highlight in your report for further development. This will include proactive support for students in development of their skills in academic writing, building on the successful use of on-line resources that you observed in your verbal report at the Examinations Board. The Programme Team will also work to ensure that students have more exposure to the theoretical perspectives that you note in your report. We shall reflect, too, on your suggestions for raising the profile of the programme within the sector and seek ways in which this may best be achieved.

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 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 thorough and constructive feedback and we look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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Director for Lifelong Learning,
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