

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:	HCES
Subject(s):	Midwifery
Programme(s) / Module(s):	HECS 3036, HECS3142, HECS3171, HECS3164, HECS3165, HECS3166
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc Midwifery (short)

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

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

Over the period of my appointment, the 18 programme did not change in any major way, although changes were made to attendance of academic staff at mid way placement interviews with student & mentors. The rationale presented was valid and modification does not seem to have had any detrimental effect. Minor adjustments were also made to timing of assessments at beginning of my appointment in response to student feedback. Overall I think students achieved high standards on a very demanding course. Comments made regarding need for consistency in internal moderation processes of theoretical assessments were taken up by staff and any other concerns raised, were responded to promptly. Issue of internal moderation for assessment of practice beyond the presence of an academic at final meeting remains an area of concern, particularly when students not required to provide examples of additional evidence to support achievement. As this course no longer runs one could argue that this is no longer an issue, although may have been considered as shortened programme now accredited at Masters level.

HECS 3142 module, (shared with 3 year programme) which presented challenges for several students, developed new strategies, which were developed by module lead, aiming to engage students and optimise learning. Although this module continued to be challenging, efforts to try alternative methods to enhance student learning is commendable. Standards achieved have been consistent over the years, however my perception is that attrition rate has increased, with more students failing after a 3rd attempt. On speaking with appropriate academics I am confident that students are offered a high level of support.

The processes within the School which have been most problematic involve administrative processes. I would suggest that clearer standards are available which outline the requirements for the external examiner and these rolled out, despite changes in personnel e.g which scripts are sent, together with up to date module/ programme handbooks at start of each academic

year. It would have been extremely helpful as an external examiner to be sent as a matter of course ; an assessment schedule at beginning of each year, early invitation to an appropriate examination board together with the opportunity to meet with students annually at said Board meeting.
Overall , I have enjoyed this opportunity to work with the academic staff and found them committed to providing a high standard of educational provision to students.

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.*

Yes

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.*

Assessment standards are good, with the processes of marking and internal moderation explicit. As the 18 month programme concise, assessment workload heavy and some minor adjustments to timing I think were made at the beginning of my period of appointment. As this course is no longer running any recommendations for more variety in assessment methods is redundant, although this may be evident in new curriculum , with higher stake modules and less assessments , in line with post graduate learning .

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 standard of students was variable with marks ranging across all bands, demonstrating the range of ability evident on comparable courses. High achieving students demonstrated rigorous academic writing and information retrieval skills, coupled with an ability to apply, analyse and evaluate theory & evidence to practice. Unfortunately and comparable to students in my institution, I think several students consistently demonstrated a poor standard of referencing & academic writing skills which did not improve despite good feedback & support from academic staff. This was most evident in students resubmitting in excess of a second attempt.

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

Assessment of practice was discussed on several occasions during my period of appointment regarding the moderation of practice assessment. Although this was deemed to occur through the presence of an academic at final interview, I still feel there is scope to consider this issue further. I also raised the issue regarding availability of additional evidence to support practice mark, together with observation & discussion with mentor.

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 was not made aware of any enhancements made in this academic 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 influence of research within the curriculum is very evident throughout all the modules I have reviewed. Students are encouraged to engage with research and different types of evidence which informs practice. Feedback from academic staff in all assessments I externally moderated, reinforces the requirement for evidence based practice, particularly if this is not explicit in work of weaker students.

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

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.

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.

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?

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?

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

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?

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

Other comments

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

School of Healthcare

Baines Wing
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Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

12 March 2014

Dear

Re: External Examiner's Report – 2012/2013

On behalf of the midwifery team I would like to thank you for your positive comments about the BSc (Hons) Midwifery (Short) programme for the 2012/13 academic year and throughout your time as external examiner. We welcome the fact that you have not faltered in your recognition of the high standard of educational provision and that there is strong evidence of a research orientation within the curricula. We are also especially pleased that you recognise the team's commitment to maintaining quality in terms of assessment feedback and support.

We are grateful that you recognise the team's on-going commitment in considering and responding to your interim reports. You highlight challenges related to administrative procedures and timely receipt of relevant information for external examiners. In light of your comments processes have been reviewed to ensure that future assessment schedules are communicated appropriately and in a timely manner.

In order to afford external examiners the opportunity to meet students the team will continue the invitation to attend OSCE examinations and to sample clinical assessments. The team wishes to reassure you of the robust processes in place relating to clinical assessment. Liaison lecturers are involved in mentor preparation where discussion centres on 'Sign Off' mentors reassurance about acceptable levels of evidence underpinning practice prior to verifying completion of learning outcomes. Within the new Clinical Assessment Document (CAD) students are required to self-assess their performance and mentors are required to demonstrate a diverse range of sources of evidence. Liaison lectures continue to contribute to final interview as a quality assurance measure.

You have provided some very positive comments relating to HECS 3142 (Using Evidence for Practice) and draw attention to a perceived increase in attrition relating to this module. The School monitors progress of students throughout assessment processes and this data suggests that attrition rates have actually improved; in past years, where attrition has occurred, sometimes it coincided at the time of this module assessment. It is pleasing that you are confident in the high level of support provided to students throughout assessment.

The team is grateful for your acknowledgement of its work in trying to improve students' referencing and academic skills and is also disappointed that despite the detailed feedback and support provided a minority of students do not improve their skills in this area.

Thank you for normally submitting your annual report in September; this greatly assists the team when compiling the programme review. Whilst receipt of the annual report is necessary to trigger payment of your fee, this is not calculated until later in the autumn to ensure that all work undertaken in the previous year has been included. This may result in payment not being made until January if the signed fee form is not received in time to meet an earlier payroll.

Head of School of Healthcare



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12 March 2014

As always the midwifery team has appreciated the positive working relationship that has existed throughout the tenure of your external examinership and has greatly valued the support and advice during this period. Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely