

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:	Healthcare
Subject(s):	Midwifery
Programme(s) / Module(s):	3 year Pre-registration Midwifery
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc (HONS)

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?

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

During the past 4 years I have been privileged to be part of system of student feedback at The University of Leeds. The process has been mainly straight forward with good support provided from the administration team and good relationships have been built with the midwifery team. It was clear that the goal of a positive student experience was a priority for both the team and the administration department.

In year 1 I commented about annotation and suggested making annotation more visible. This was duly acknowledged and produced marking where the student was able to see how they may enhance subsequent assignments, practice documents or re submissions. I also requested responses to the comments I made and throughout that year responses were received as requested. In year 1 the students commented about how well supported they felt.

In year 2 the Nursing and Midwifery Council aimed for drug calculation to be undertaken in practice. This meant that the process within the majority of Universities in the UK needed to review the process attached to this assessment. I suggested that the process should alter and the midwifery team altered the system during year 2 and year 3. During year 2 there were some issues related to presenting student

work on a CD for external moderation, where annotations from markers was not possible. After discussion within the midwifery team feedback was developed, providing students with the ability to appreciate the mark awarded in a more detailed way.

In year 3 I commented on how the process of requiring signatures from the external marker immediately before progression boards created stress for both the administration department and the external marker. I ensured knowledge about annual leave was notified in good time. I became concerned that I may be teaching all day or working elsewhere, and may have been unable to respond in the short time allowed. The process was reviewed and immediate response became less.

This year the new online marking system has been implemented and the midwifery team have adapted well. There has been an issue where documentation in a parcel did not reflect the exact content on the mark sheet, however, the information was amended quickly and efficiently and enabled the process to run without delay.

Overall, the team and administration department have responded well to any comments made and I thank them for their professional attitude and approach.

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 intended learning outcomes for the programme are commensurate with the level of award and fulfil the professional sector requirements, providing the students with potential opportunities to demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge.

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 the aims and ILO's have met national subject benchmarks and the aims and ILOs are comparable with other institutions and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

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.*

Design, structure and assessment reflect an appropriate level of award and classification. Teaching, learning and assessment reflect an acceptable range of achievement comparable with other institutions. At times the work produced by student midwives demonstrated knowledge that reflected a high teaching standard.

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.*

Adequate opportunity has been given to the students to demonstrate their level of achievement. Students who achieved high marks demonstrated an ability to link theory to practice. Additionally, as their time progressed on the course, students demonstrated their criticality within their theoretical discussion. Low marks reflected a descriptive approach and less attention to detail. Comprehensive annotated feedback within the student's work by the markers identified to the students how they would be able to improve future work. Levels of achievement are comparable with the level of achievement in other institutions.

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

Clinical documents have reflected a range of ability which is comparable with other institutions. Some students received excellent comments from their mentors, reflecting the support provided by the midwifery team at Leeds and the related clinical areas. The standard of documentation within the practice assessment documents has improved vastly. There is now a minority of students who submit incomplete documents.

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.

It is evident that the team aim for a high standard of teaching and learning because of the work produced by the students in general. During this year the online marking system has been introduced. Familiarity with the system will grow as the next year progresses and monitoring issues and the response to issues will be useful for the team to understand and learn from. There was one episode where information on the student's feedback sheet did not reflect the intent of the markers, but this was because of an early error in the new system, which has now been rectified.

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.

Students demonstrate that they are aware of research related to midwifery topics in assessment submission and portfolio development. Students take part in a systematic review of literature which has enabled a demonstration of how complex information may be analysed and synthesised within their work. This is an excellent module for the third year of the programme and will assist the students with transferable skills when employed as a midwife. The work produced from this module was above the standard of other universities. Again this year, please commend the team for their approach to research within the curriculum.

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

NA

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 the information provided is easily accessible with clear guidance.

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 there was appropriate documentation provided.

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 I have been provided with draft examination papers. When suggestions have been made the staff have responded positively. I would suggest that the answer guidelines for the draft papers should be presented at the same time to enable the external marker to assess how markers will standardise their approach to marking examinations.

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 sufficient work has been provided and I am confident that annotated work identifies to the student where they are able to improve. The new online marking system will contribute to clarity related to annotations.

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

Subjects chosen for the dissertation were relevant and important within the field of midwifery. Some students struggle with this level of work but that standard of work is comparable with other universities. The guidance provided by markers was easy to understand and informative for the students.

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?

I was able to attend the board but was informed there were no midwifery scripts to be reviewed at the time I was able to attend. On the days I was unable to attend I was available after teaching to provide comment. I intend to be present on September 23rd 2013, which is the next planned meeting.

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

It was clear where students have been required to submit after the first submission date because information was described within moderator reports. Mitigating circumstances and medical evidence have never been part of the information provided to the external examiner.

Other comments

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

This will be my final external examiners report and I would like to thank the midwifery team for their openness and transparency around the student experience. When commenting on work my suggestions have been taken seriously and appropriate responses and recommendations have emerged as a result. The standards of the team are high and therefore the team produces a high calibre of student midwife. Students that struggle academically or in practice are supported and in the majority of times go on to succeed. The team needs to be commended for their consistency in approach, intelligent feedback to the students and their support for those who struggle.

I would like to thank the administration team for their friendliness and approachability, which has provided a smooth process in relation to receiving and sending appropriate documentation. When there has been reason to communicate about documentation the process has been considered and revised, enabling a smoother process.

Baines Wing
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

6 February 2014

Dear _____

Re: External Examiner's Report 2012-2013 – BSc (Hons) Midwifery (3 Year)

Thank you for your final annual external examiner's report and the many positive comments within. The team is pleased that its responses to all your requests for information and administration issues were dealt with to your satisfaction. The team has conveyed your appreciation to the administration staff for their friendliness and approachability. Your comments on the high standard of teaching and the commitment of the midwifery team are welcome. The team is proud that some of our students produce outstanding work and the majority are comparable with other institutions. Those less able are supported to achieve and become solid safe practitioners. The team agrees that the completion of practice documents has improved and liaison lecturers/module leaders for these modules provide greater guidance to mentors and students to ensure they are completed in all areas.

As you are aware students are assessed on their drug calculations in practice by undertaking the online test. They provide a certificate of 100% achievement with their practice document whilst on the Delivery Suite in year 2. This will continue in the new programme. The system is working well.

The School and the midwifery team have been making a concerted effort to maintain and improve the high quality of student feedback and have responded to your helpful suggestions. Recent changes with a move to on-line marking, is raising new challenges as we adapt and become familiar with electronic annotations to scripts but it is our intention to continue annotating as this gives more direct feedback. The midwifery team has seen a marked increase in the NSS score for the programme this year in all areas including assessment and feedback, which correlates with your comments.

The team has noted your comment that it would be helpful to receive the answer guide with the draft examination papers.

The team is delighted with your comment on the quality of work produced by students in the final Project being above that of other institutions and the commendation to the team for the approach to research within the curriculum. It is a major initiative of the University of Leeds to integrate research led teaching into all programmes and this has been a major driver in the design of the new midwifery curricula. The team is evaluating the changes and rich and helpful data has been achieved. Overall the standard of work the new first years have produced is high.

The team has found it a pleasure to work with you over the last four years and greatly appreciates the constructive comments you have made to help improve the standard of assessment. The midwifery team wishes you well in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely