

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:	School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	<i>Counselling</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<u>Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory</u> HECS 3193 Introduction to Counselling Skills and Theory HECS 3194 Developing Counselling Theory and Applications
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

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

N/A

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

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 ILO's are appropriate to the modules and relevant for the award under consideration.

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.*

QAA benchmark standards apply to degree level courses (level 6) in counselling and psychotherapy so do not specifically relate to this course. However, the learning outcomes of this course relate to the relevant subject specific skills. Sufficient weight is given to practical competence in counselling skills (demonstrated with a peer). Tutors may wish to review the ILOs on a regular basis to take the standards into account and ensure that consistency is maintained..

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.*

Assessments are in keeping with the award. The feedback given by tutors is focussed and developmental and highlights how students can develop further. Clear criteria are used for assessments which are transparent. The full range of marks was used in assessment. In discussions with students the use of anonymous marking was questioned and I would challenge the value of it in this type of course where tutors need to engage in an individual development process/dialogue with each student. Although it is University wide practice it could limit the value of feedback given.

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 cohort examined during 2012-13 demonstrated a high standard of performance for an introductory level course and this reflects well on the teaching of this course. This compares well with other courses at a similar level. Students are encouraged to be reflective and to integrate theory with practice. The course provides an excellent foundation for those progressing to the master's level course. Students commented that they had received very helpful high quality feedback from tutors.

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 was not the external examiner in the previous year so it is difficult to comment. However, I note that I have been provided with a UTube link for skills assessments as proposed by the previous EE. This has been very helpful. However, I have not had access to student evaluations and this would be helpful in the future.

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.

Tutors are active researchers and students are encouraged to develop an awareness of research appropriate to this level of study.

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

N/A

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, full information was provided. I had the opportunity to attend an induction meeting which was informative and well organised. Extensive paperwork was provided to assist in my role.

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. I received the relevant handbooks and marking criteria..

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?

N/A

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. I have not attended a Board meeting yet due to the timing of my appointment. I will be attending in September 2013.

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

To the best of my knowledge yes, but see question 14.

Other comments

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

I had the opportunity to meet informally with a group of students. They expressed a high level of satisfaction with the course. They stated that they had appreciated good tutor support and attention to emotional safety in the group. They also commented that administrative aspects of the course could have been better organised at the start.

School of Healthcare

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

24 January 2014

Dear |

Re External Examiner's Report 2012-2013 - Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory

Thank you for your encouraging and supportive report on the Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory programme. The team has found it a pleasure to work with you in this first year of appointment and is pleased that you are willing to be re-appointed for a further three years.

The programme team has considered your report and note your comments on the applicability or otherwise of QAA benchmarks to this course. The team has exhaustively mapped the benchmarks onto the modules of our professional training course, the MA Psychotherapy and Counselling. Although these do not specifically relate to the Certificate programme, as this is not a full practitioner training, the team does think there is a need to map the skills-based benchmarks onto this course, while recognising that the level of achievement in skills practice to be reached on the Certificate is not that required of a professional qualification. The team will be looking at this issue in the coming academic year.

The team appreciates your comments on the clarity of assessment criteria and quality of tutor feedback. The team shares your questioning of the value of anonymous marking in a course where personal development and individualised developmental feedback is important. It is not possible, of course, to mark the skills assessments anonymously as they are video recorded. It is therefore only the written work that is anonymised in accordance with University practice, but the nature of the reflections inevitably means that students are recognisable to markers. The team will explore ways of meeting the University's regulations while facilitating meaningful feedback to the students.

Your comments on student performance and achievements are welcome. The team also notes your request for access to student evaluations. These are available at the end of the programme as a whole, and copies can be sent to you in due course.

Although there is no research component to this programme, students are introduced to research literature in the field and tutors share their own research interests with students. The team appreciates your comments on the encouragement it gives to students to develop research awareness.

continued/

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24 January 2014

The team is very pleased that you were able to meet informally with the students during the year, and it was pleasing to note that they expressed a high level of satisfaction with the course, tutor support, and the emotional safety of the group. Their comments to you on the need for better administrative organisation are useful. Concerns over the timeliness of acceptance letters, delayed due to staff absences last year, have been addressed.

Thank you once again for your work with us this year. The team looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you.

Yours sincerely