

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:	Faculty of medicine and Health / School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	Midwifery
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery / MSc in Midwifery
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PG Diploma

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. I received a copy of the previous External Examiners reports regarding the quality of past midwifery programmes for registered nurses at this Institution: i.e. the BSc (Hons) in Midwifery [Shortened]. However, as this particular programme was not approved at Postgraduate Diploma / MSc level until February 2012, this is the first year it has been running, hence this will be the first External Examiner's report for this new programme.

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 programme's Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes, including the modules I have reviewed so far, appear commensurate with the standard expected of postgraduate study.

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's Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes appear commensurate with this level of study and professional Award in other Higher Education Institutions, including my own. The programme has also been approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council as being fit for purpose in preparing registered nurses to become midwife registrants.

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.*

To date I have reviewed essays and examination scripts from all eight students undertaking this programme for the Postgraduate Diploma Award from two modules: HECS 3260: Transition to Midwifery and HECS 5262 Midwifery 1. The marking and moderation process is transparent and the quality of feedback / feed-forward to the students appears to be of a high standard especially to the students who do not perform as well as others. However, student performance overall is good and is reflective of the standard of teaching and tutorial offered by the midwifery academic team.

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.*

Compared with other institutions offering shortened midwifery programmes, the academic standard of the students' work assessed is similar and variable across the grade bands. The students who have achieved higher grades demonstrate ability to articulate their ideas more effectively, demonstrate critical analysis and synthesis and apply the relevant theories to their work. Similar to my own institution and with this particular group of student, proof reading and standard of referencing in the early part of their programme, requires attention.

As this programme is in its infancy and I have only reviewed the work from two modules, it is difficult to make comment about the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort as a whole, especially as it constitutes only eight in number.

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

Although this programme has key practice elements that are summatively assessed, to date I have not reviewed any of this documentation to make comment on.

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.

As this programme only commenced during the current academic year, it is too soon to note any areas of good practice and enhancements.

The programme now being offered at Postgraduate level is in itself an enhancement on previous midwifery programmes offered to registered nurses.

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.

It is evident in the two modules reviewed that research evidence influences the delivery of the curriculum. In addition, feedback / feed-forward from markers reaffirm the importance of research to inform written assignments and clinical practice.

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.*

I was unable to attend the Induction day for new External Examiners in Leeds. I have been sent all documentation and a CD about University Assessment processes and regulations in a timely manner to fulfil my role, both from Academic Quality and Standards and from Learning and Teaching Support. Arrangements were made for me to meet the Midwifery Academic team in April 2013 to discuss my role and the new programme.

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 have received all necessary documentation. However, although I have completed a Module Assessment Board Form for each module I have reviewed, I am yet to receive a response to my comments from the respective module leader(s).

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 received the draft examination paper for HECS 5262 Midwifery and sent my comments. However, I did not receive any feedback on how they had been addressed. It was not until I received the scripts along with the examination paper to review *following* the assessment that I knew they had been considered.

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?

To date I have received scripts from all eight students undertaking this programme, including the resubmissions from two students who were unsuccessful in HECS 3260: Transition to Midwifery. All scripts include detailed annotated comments from the markers as well as the feedback / feed-forward comments. I am aware that as this is a new programme the marking and moderation to date has been particularly rigorous with all work being thoroughly assessed by two lecturers with the examination appearing to have further scrutiny of a third assessor at moderation. This process does however, seem very labour intensive and I wonder if it would be employed if the cohort was much larger?

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

N/A at this stage in the programme.

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?

To date I am still to attend my first Board of Examiners which is scheduled for Monday 23rd September 2013.

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

Having still to attend a Board of Examiners, I am currently unable to make any comment on these issues.

Other comments

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

The Midwifery Academic team have been most welcoming and helpful in my first year as the External Examiner to the Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery / MSc in Midwifery. Overall, they have provided necessary details to support my role as requested.

It would be useful to meet with this particular cohort and their midwife mentors at some point to share their experiences of this new programme and how they perceive the quality of teaching and assessing in Leeds. This would also be in keeping with QAA Standards for External Examining.

Baines Wing
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

6 February 2014

Dear

Re: External Examiner's Report –2012/2013

Thank you for your annual report for the Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery programme. It is pleasing to note that you consider the programme aims and intended learning outcomes have, in the modules you have seen so far, met the expected standard for this level of study.

Can I take this opportunity to address some of the issues raised in your report. You do comment that to date you have not been able to review any of the practice documentation. The team has recently introduced a new regional document which remains with the students throughout the programme; when the students submit their documents at the end of the programme they will be available for you to review prior to the examination board. This is perhaps a limitation of the documentation. However the students will also undergo an oral assessment at the final interview of the programme. The Module Leader will send you the dates and perhaps you may be able to attend so that you can observe the process, meet with the students, as well as review the clinical documentation in action.

Your comments on students' proof-reading and academic writing skills are noted and are shared by the team, who work with the students to ensure these are improved as they progress through the programme.

I apologise that you have not received comments from the Module Leaders regarding the MAB forms. Revised arrangements have now been put in place, as mentioned at the External Examiners' Day, to ensure you receive a response in the future.

I am also sorry that you did not receive acknowledgement of your comments on the Examination paper for HECS 5262M. Your comments were considered and as you know alterations made. In future the team will make sure you are sent a copy of the amended examination paper.

Regarding the marking and moderation of the HECS 3260 Transition to Midwifery module, the module team felt that an exceptional level of scrutiny of the scripts was justified, as this was the first time the module had run and as it was the first module of a new programme. However, your comments are extremely valid and if the cohort were larger it would have been unrealistic to undertake this level of scrutiny.

continued/



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6 February 2014

I understand that you had the opportunity to meet with students on your recent visit to Leeds.

May I take this opportunity to thank-you for your positive report and detailed input into the programme.
The team looks forward to working with you over the current session.

Yours sincerely