

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	School of Dentistry
Subject(s):	<i>Dentistry</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Year 1 Induction; Health and Health Promotion; Introduction to the Oral Environment; Oral Disease, Defence and Repair 1; Anxiety and Pain Management; Personal and Professional Development 1; Clinical Practice 1; Year 3 Clinical Skills B; Illness and Wellbeing; Undergraduate Project; Child Centred Dentistry; Personal and Professional Development 3; Communication Skills; Clinical Practice 3
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BChD / MChD

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**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 Quality Assurance**
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

Nil

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

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.*

In the context of the parallel modular programmes examined, the aims and learning outcomes were appropriate, laying the foundations for succeeding years.

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.*

Outcomes for a Dental qualification are provided by the national regulator (the General Dental Council in England). Learning outcomes examined in the modules under consideration were all comparable to those in use by other UK institutions teaching dentistry. The Leeds course has been inspected and found sufficient by the General Dental Council. Pending access to the totality of the assessments through all the years of the complete programme, I am unable to comment as to whether the programmes as a whole address all of the regulator's stipulated outcomes. The overall quality of the candidates was again high and confirmed that the programme operates to the highest national standard.

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.*

Use of mixed modes of assessment within modules, again provides a broad assessment of the candidates. This breadth of assessment together with the modular course design has by necessity demanded a large number of separate assessment events within the course. In previous reports I have noted that marking these assessments in the highly rigorous manner that had obviously been carried out, is a very significant task in terms of staff time and effort. I must again point to the high workload the staff continue to cope with in assessment.

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.*

Again, the achievements of the students in written examinations of multiple formats are comparable in quality to the overall standard of similar programmes in other UK higher education 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 Practice 1 and Clinical Practice 3 modules had been taught and assessed in appropriate styles. Clinical Practice 3 for instance was multi-mode assessed - In the 3rd BDS OSCE, procedures for this examination were in line with the leading edge of best practice with Borderline Regression pass mark setting and active analysis/review of stations using psychometric data to ensure optimum reliability and validity.

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.

Curriculum mapping and examination blueprinting to align with GDC "Preparing For Practice" outcomes for registration is now well established and appropriate standard setting universally employed (where the assessment mode permits).

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.

In the first three years of these courses critical thinking and scholarship are fostered by the curriculum design and manner of assessment.

8. **Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

N/A

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

9. **If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements**

I have been allocated as a mentor to a new external examiner and ahead of the examinations had the opportunity to work together in reviewing the papers. We attended the recent BoE together and had an opportunity to reciprocally review each other's work

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. **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.

The assessment processes were transparent, rigorous and fair at all times. I was given access to all relevant material.

11. **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.

All relevant documentation was made available..

12. **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?**

Questions were of an appropriate level and character. Any changes I suggested were acted on.

13. **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 to both.

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

Not applicable

15. **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 attended the meeting and was satisfied with the process.

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

Appropriate investigation and consideration of mitigating circumstance was enacted.

Other comments

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

Taken individually all the assessments appear to again have been conducted fairly and rigorously. Taken together the assessments examine the candidates across a broad range. I was again impressed by the volume of work that has been put in to mark the assessments.

May I suggest thought is given on probable future challenges such as-

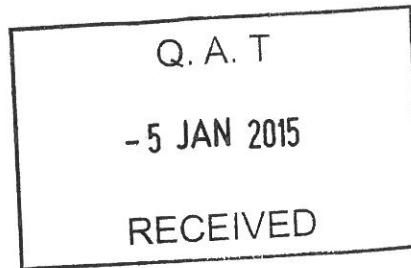
The volume of work that must be assessed under the current scheme is high compared to other institutions.. There is only limited scope to increase efficiency in manpower terms when using essays and short answer questions in high stakes examinations.

It may reduce workloads overall if the modular format was elastic enough to allow assessments to be grouped so that multiple choice exams were taken in fewer larger chunks. This would also help with statistical exam performance analysis. Rationalisation of the number of written assessments (possibly by course element mergers) could also reduce marking workloads a little.

Assessment of "group work" (eg Health and Health Promotion in first year) needs especial attention to ensure there is no possibility of advantage or disadvantage being given to candidates by the architecture of the assessment. "Group Work" may also attract scrutiny in GDC inspections when there may be questions regarding QA measures to ensure candidates cannot "slipstream" learning outcomes assisted by stronger team members.

School of Dentistry

University of Leeds
Clarendon Way
Leeds LS2 9LU



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

17 December 2014

Dear

Thank you for your External Examiner's report for Years 1 and 3 for 2013-14.

We are pleased that you find that our mix of assessments provides a broad assessment of the candidates and that our processes are rigorous and fair. We note your comments about staff workload in supporting such an extensive assessment portfolio and we are looking to make some changes which should streamline some module assessments whilst maintaining the educational strengths.

We welcome your comments on curriculum mapping and examination blueprinting. We have mapped our curriculum to the GDC's "Preparing for Practice" and will be looking to blueprint assessments to learning outcomes over the next couple of years.

We note your comments in relation to group work. With regards to the assessment of group work in Health and Health Promotion in Year 1 we have felt that group work develops team working skills which we wish to encourage at this very early stage in the programme. Within the submitted assignment the students are permitted to present shared content relating to the aims and objectives, methodology including materials, results and conclusions sections. However the introduction and discussion sections must be the student's individual work. It is considered that this prevents a weak student from passing this assignment through the efforts of their group but yet does foster co-operation within the group. The assignment also comprises only part of the overall modular assessment. We will bear your comments in mind when looking to use group work in assessments.

We are as always grateful for the hard work of our External Examiners and your input is valuable as we seek to develop our assessments. We look forward to your future contribution to our assessment processes.

Yours sincerely,

Dean of School