

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:	Medicine and health
Subject(s):	<i>Public Health</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Postgraduate Cert/ Diploma/Masters in Public Health
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Masters

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

No urgent issues

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?

Copies of the previous external examiner report and the School response were provided to me. In addition the previous external examiner offered to provide mentoring in taking on this role, in order to provide another source of support during the hand over.

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

Not applicable

4. 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.*

From reviewing the course documentation and having had the opportunity to review various elements of assessment I am able to confirm that the aims and learning outcomes are commensurate with a Masters level of award. Information regarding aims and learning outcomes have been provided to me via course and module handbooks. The structure and content of the programme affords the students flexibility particularly for those on the part time programme. Core and optional modules are available for students.

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 aims and learning outcomes are comparable with other programmes and cover the core domains of public health. Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of public health students can select optional modules from other areas which is appropriate. A number of students undertake modules as CPD demonstrating the relevance of the course in practice.

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.*

I have had the opportunity to review essays, examinations and dissertations. Feedback for most modules has been of a high quality however the course team may wish to ensure that this is reflected across all modules to benefit the student cohort. Online feedback is extensively used and this has made the process of external examining particularly streamlined and the course team are to be commended on this. Use is made of second marking to ensure the consistency of results and feedback. There is variability across the student cohort and some failures at first attempts however, the feedback provided seems to enable students to progress at subsequent attempts.

Having sat in on a teaching session during my first year of appointment, reviewed the programme survey 2013 and listened to student feedback the quality of learning and teaching is of a high 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.*

The academic standards are comparable to other cohorts and as expected there is variability. The modes of assessment support the students in demonstrating the achievement of aims and learning outcomes. As a result of the discussion at the last management group and the 12/13 quantitative feedback the course team may wish to consider whether an element of assessed presentation or improved signposting to student support may support students personal development and improve the responses on this question area.

I have been made aware of some cases of plagiarism and the processes by which these matters are dealt with which appear to be rigorous.

For the 13/14 cohort the strengthening of entrance criteria and the additional support during the induction process may bring about additional benefits in improving pass rates across modules.

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.

N/A first year in post

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.

A number of the modules utilise student experience in the workplace in order to develop elements of work and this is of particular benefit for students applying theory to practice. This is particularly apparent in the Promoting health and Ophthalmic public health. Students are encouraged to develop their own research questions for their dissertations thereby developing their research skills.

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.*

On appointment I was provided with a variety of documentation from the central administration of the University (External Examiner Handbook 12-13) and from the School itself. The School has been very efficient at keeping me updated and the involvement of the external examiner within the course management has been of particular benefit. Some Universities provide courses for new external examiners to support their role and this may be an area worthy of consideration by the University for future new appointments.

The material provided was sufficient to enable me to fulfil my role. The Course director and administrator were always helpful in clarifying issues when requested.

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.*

Programme specifications and module handbooks that included marking criteria were provided. The programme specification was provided at the commencement of my appointment and when reviewing results module handbooks and marking criteria were made available.

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?

Where amendments had been made to assessments draft papers were provided ahead of time for consideration. I was able to comment via the course administrator and when comments were received this was feedback via the member of staff responsible for setting the question.

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?

All student results were provided and a suitable sample of assessed work enabled me to review the range of marks. Initially I was requested to review comments prior to them being returned to the students however after discussion with the programme leader we agreed that this was unnecessary and created the potential for delay in return of work. I am therefore happy with the revised arrangement whereby I am sent copies of results and feedback after the results are released to the students. Student results including feedback provided have been e mailed to me for consideration. Whilst the majority of modules had a high level of comprehensive feedback there are some modules need to ensure a similar standard of feedback.

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

A wide variety of dissertation topic areas and methods were presented from this cohort of students. The dissertations were predominantly student driven in the development of ideas. The standard of assessment was appropriate and all dissertations were double marked. Detailed comments were provided 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?

Yes satisfactory arrangements were made across the exam board process and the recommendations and decisions made were clear and transparent.

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

My understanding from the course team is that consideration of mitigation and medical evidence occurs prior to the examination board. The course team appear to be diligent in their application of mitigating circumstances in relevant circumstances.

Other comments

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

The course team have involved me in both the Course management and Examination process and I have found this particularly helpful in gaining a clear understanding of the course, staff, student perspectives and the examination process. Processes are pre-dominantly electronic and there is a move towards paperless exam boards which is welcomed.

There have been high conversion rates from applicants into this programme and I understand that the course has become more rigorous in the application of entry criteria. It is disappointing that a decision has been made to defer recruitment for a year as this may result in a loss of momentum for the programme however, I have been reassured that the current student experience will not be adversely affected by this decision.

Overall the course is well run and managed with staff and students engaging in productive dialogue about the programme.

**Leeds Institute of Medical Education
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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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11 November 2013

Dear <>

External Examiner's report for Master in Public Health 2012-13

As the School of Medicine's Director of Postgraduate Studies, I receive all the External Examiners' reports for the eighteen programmes offered in 2012-13. First, let me thank you for assembling the 2012-13 report for the programmes in Public Health. This is your first report.

Good practice

I note that your report states that there are no matters requiring urgent attention. You felt that there had been a good and a supportive handover from the previous External Examiner to you. You note the use of on-line feedback to students and commend the programme team for this.

Standards

You state in the standards section that the learning outcomes and programme content are appropriate for postgraduate study in Public Health.

Programme Leader's response

I have enclosed with this letter a response assembled by <>, Programme Leader. You will note that <> has addressed the issues of feedback to students and plagiarism.

Administration

I note that you commented that you had been provided with copies of student guides, assignments and research dissertations and that this enabled you to have confidence in the standards used by the Public Health team.

Development of the programme

I support the team in the decision to delay recruitment in 2014-15. This is necessary because of the changes in the Public Health service and the Leeds team is taking the opportunity to ensure that the programme is fit for purpose.

continues .

Director of Postgraduate Studies

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Thank you for your positive report and I hope that the Leeds team can maintain the high standards of delivering education in Public Health.

Yours sincerely

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Enc: <> 6 November 2013