

## 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:	Lifelong Learning
Subject(s):	<i>Preparation for HE</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<i>PHE</i>
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

**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](mailto: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*

No areas require urgent attention

**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*

## 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 Programmes' aims and intended learning outcomes are well considered and appropriate for preparation of students for study in Higher Education.

**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.*

There are no official national subject benchmarks for pre-degree level, but the aims and ILOs are comparable with courses elsewhere nationally and appropriate for students progression.

**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.*

There are some excellent assessments demonstrating a good range of assessment style. I particularly commend the use of a reflective blog which covers a range of pedagogic areas of support. I am pleased to note that the assessment which I expressed concern about last year has now changed.

**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 demonstrated by the students indicate that the course does an excellent job of preparing students for progression to degree-level study. This was a good cohort of students who are likely to do well as they progress.

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

NA

**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.*

This is a well-established course which continues to demonstrate good practice for preparing students to progress to degree-level study.

**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.*

The use of the independent research project is an excellent way to support students develop understanding of research skills.

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

NA

## 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

NA

## 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 material provided was sufficient to allow me to act effectively as an external examiner

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.*

I received appropriate documentation

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?

I received draft examination papers and was able to comment and make suggestions for minor changes.

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?

There was an excellent range of assessed work available for me to have confidence in the standard of student work

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

NA

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?

The administrative arrangements were excellent, I attended the meeting and am satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes – there was clear evidence that mitigating circumstances and medical evidence had been considered appropriately.

## Other comments

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

This is now my third year of moderating and it was good to see the high standards continuing in the Programme. The modules are well-considered and support learning through the year to enable students to progress to their chosen routes.

## 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:	Lifelong Learning
Subject(s):	<i>Interdisciplinary Science</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<i>ISFY</i> <i>EEFY</i>
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

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**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 areas require urgent attention

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*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*

## 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 Programmes' aims and intended learning outcomes are well considered and appropriate for preparation of students for study in Higher Education.

**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.*

There are no official national subject benchmarks for pre-degree level, but the aims and ILOs are comparable with courses elsewhere nationally and appropriate for students progression.

**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.*

Generally the assessment methods are well considered and informed by the learning outcomes. There are some quite challenging assessments which clearly differentiate between students. The amount of assessment appears to be suitable with the exception of the module **International Biology 0138** I question how helpful it is to have this number of different assessments and perhaps it could be brought in line with the quantity of assessment with the other Biology module

**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 demonstrated by the students indicate that the course does an excellent job of preparing students for progression to degree-level study.

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

NA

**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.*

The considerable improvement noted previously, as the programme has migrated further into the University, has continued to allow greater consistency of approach across the module.

**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 was very encouraging to see that projects have been incorporated into the programme and the standard was high. This is an excellent way to support students' understanding of the research process.

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

NA

## For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

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NA

## The Examination/Assessment Process

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*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 had sufficient material to make the required judgements

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.*

I received appropriate documentation

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?

I received draft examination papers which had questions of appropriate nature and level and I was able to comment and make suggestions for minor changes.

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?

There was an excellent range of assessed work available for me to have confidence in the standard of student work. The scripts were clearly marked and annotated including second marking/ moderation being explicit.

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

NA

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?

The administrative arrangements were excellent, I attended the meeting and am satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes – there was clear evidence that mitigating circumstances and medical evidence had been considered appropriately.

## Other comments

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

This is now my third year of moderating and it was good to see the high standards continuing in the Programme. It has been enjoyable to see the Programme complete its transition to being fully incorporated into the

University. The work shows that you have a dedicated teaching staff, committed to their students and supporting their goals.

When I visited in February, I noted that there were incomplete sections of moderation. For example, the module 0132 Maths for Physics and Engineering has a portfolio of 8 exercises which represent an excellent, supportive use of assessment for learning, allowing students to build their self-efficacy with experience. Of these 8 exercises, only the first one has been moderated. It may be that the full set of exercises will be moderated by the end of the academic year. I would recommend, however, that it may be more useful to moderate a set of completed portfolios by student rather than each separate task. This would allow the holistic nature of the portfolio to be moderated with an overview of how particular students are progressing through the module.

With the module evaluations, I noted that some of the low average marks were because students had marked a particular section as n/a, but these were then counted as “not satisfied” giving a lower average than warranted, could this be accounted for?

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x<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear <>

### **External Examiner's Report for 2013-14**

I am writing to thank you formally for your work over the last year as our External Examiner for our Science Foundation Years and PHE and for the reports that you produced in the summer. It is of great value for us to have the benefit of your observations as a practitioner who brings such knowledge and experience in the field. I know that staff from both programme teams are warmly appreciative of the opportunities to reflect with you on issues and developments within their programmes.

Over the last few months, we have been considering feedback that we have received from our students, teaching staff and external examiners and formulating plans for the 2014-15 academic session. In the light of this, I would like both to respond to your own report and to give you a broader sense of our thinking across the range of the LLC's provision.

In both of the programme areas for which you are External Examiner, you find that outcomes, curriculum design and standards are appropriate and that assessment and feedback processes are well designed and fairly handled. It is encouraging to see that, in relation to both, you observe that "academic standards demonstrated by the students indicate that the course does an excellent job of preparing students for progression to degree level study." We also note that you commend the use of research projects as a means of enabling students to develop research skills and highlight the overall strengths of both programmes: PHE as a "well-established course which continues to demonstrate good practice" and science provision as an area that has seen "considerable improvement" and "greater consistency" across modules with the migration of the programme from a college to University base.

With regard to assessment strategy, you commend the good range of methods used in PHE, in particular the use of reflective blogs, and note "well considered" and sometimes "quite challenging" assignments in science that enable clear differentiation of students. In science modules, you find yourself in agreement with the amount of assessment though ask us to review the pattern in LLC0138 where you question the helpfulness of so many different assignments. This is something that we shall be reflecting on through the year as part of a wider review of our assessment strategy in the sciences in the light of feedback from students.



Moving on from your own field, please find enclosed a summary of feedback from all of our external examiners. You will see that your positive evaluation of our learning and teaching, feedback and support for students is shared across the range of examiners. Points for development are generally programme-specific though, wherever appropriate, we are careful to ensure that recommendations are considered across our provision as a whole.

Feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Experience Survey continues to show a very positive picture, with strong satisfaction scores across all areas of the survey. It is particularly encouraging to find that students' satisfaction on assessment and feedback remains high (and significantly above national averages) in a year where we have introduced new assessment criteria and feedback arrangements. Please find enclosed a copy of our action plan for 2014-15 which summarises the data from surveys and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

During 2013-14, we also had our Student Academic Experience Review. This is a process which takes place every five years for all departments in the University. It involves formal review by a panel of colleagues from across the institution supported by an external reviewer, in this case the Director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at <> University. The panel considers documentation, including our own self-assessment, interviews staff and students and then formulates a report to the University's Taught Student Education Board. Please find this report attached, for your information. We have been very encouraged by its positive findings, including commendations for good practice, and have been working on following-up proposals for further development (as you will see from the action plan which I am also enclosing).

Thank you, once again, for your work on our behalf as External Examiner. We look forward to your continuing association with the LLC in the year ahead.

With all good wishes,

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Interim Director  
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