

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:

Foundation Degree in Professional Studies in Family support
BA (Hons) in Child and Family Studies

Subject(s):

*See below*Programme(s) /
Module(s):Module: LLLC1083 - the development of Child Welfare
Module: Child welfare research policy and practice
Module: Managing the external Environment
Module: management and leadership
Module: Academic skills in family support
Module: Safeguarding Children
Module: Child and family Health module
Module: Violent and sexual offending young people
Module: Child Welfare in Early Years
Module: Advanced work based learning in family support 2210Awards (e.g.
BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA (Hons) in Child and Family Studies

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 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

None

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?

N.A.

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

This is my final year as external examiner to this programme and I very impressed with the work of the students and staff alike. The programme at both foundation and BA (Hons) levels continues to present and grow as an important applied practice programme with strong relevance to workers in the field of family support. It is designed to meet the needs of 'return learners' and 'latecomers' to education and the programme is orientated to fit in with those wishing to complete the programme on a part-time study basis. Over the last three years I have noted incremental improvements particularly in relation to the standards of written work presentation, and content expression. Importantly in relation to dissertations staff have done excellent work in enhancing the standard of minor thesis in areas such as methodological rigour and better analysis and discussion of findings by students. It is obvious to me that the programme is successful because of the rich experiences of students in the applied world of practice coupled with the commitment of the course director and associate director and team. In sum, the programme continues to meet a tangible need and niche in the market of applied social science with specific emphasis on the study of family support methods.

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 content of the curriculum of the programme is fit for purpose in terms of an applied addressing the specific needs of the student population. The learning outcomes set for student are appropriate and fair, given the academic qualification on offer. In terms of the governance of the work of students, marking and moderation systems are fine with feedback to students respectful, constructive fair and helpful. There is strong evidence that both the marking sheets feedback and moderating descriptors are being utilized.

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 meets national standards and having reviewed similar education programmes elsewhere in the UK and internationally, I continue to be very happy that the programme is of the required standard in every respect

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.*

The assessment methods are very fair and marking with extensive comments provided to students as well as robust moderation mechanisms is most impressive.

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.*

Overall ,the academic standard of students work is commendable, particularly given the rich content of knowledge and practice experience that students bring to the programme. The issue of student capacity to write clearly and critically rather than in a poor manner or just descriptively is and will remain a challenge to the course. However I have noticed an improvement in standards in part due to the very proactive actions of the Director and team in addressing this issue.

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

Given that students utilise their work contexts as practice placement, there is no clinical practice component relevant to the programme on offer.

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.

From my comments above you will note that I believe that issues raised in previous years have been addressed. On going review of these matters is required into the future and perhaps my

views might be shared with the new incoming external examiner if thought to be useful

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.

There is abundant evidence that current research is being operationalised by students in their written work and in the teaching content provided by lecturers. Similarly, the action research dissertations undertaken by students are of high quality and provide a strong relevance to the field of scrutiny.

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

Not applicable

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

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

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?

Yes

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

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

Yes

Other comments

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

As external examiner to the programme I wish to reiterate my comments in congratulating the University of Leeds in hosting the much needed education programme and to extend a strong word of congratulations to the Director and team on the programme for a 'job very well done'.

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 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 Child and Family Studies and for the report 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 <> in particular, is warmly appreciative of the opportunities to reflect with you on issues and developments within her programme.

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.

Your report includes an end of appointment section although I am delighted that this has proved premature and that you are able to complete your term of office. This is much appreciated and we look forward to welcoming you to Leeds next summer for what will then be your final visit as External. It is helpful, nonetheless, to read your overview of the provision which you describe as "an important applied practice programme with strong relevance to workers in the field of family support" and to note your attribution of this success to, "the rich experience of students in the applied world of practice coupled with the commitment of the course director, associate director and team". Your observation of incremental improvement over the last three years in the presentation of written work and quality of dissertations is also particularly encouraging.

From the rest of your report, we note your sense of "abundant evidence that current research is being operationalised by students ... and in the teaching content provided by lecturers" and your praise for the action research undertaken by students in their dissertations. We are also pleased to find that you continue to have confidence in the overall standards of the programmes and confirm the fairness and rigour of assessment and feedback processes. You observe that the capacity of some students to write clearly and critically remains a challenge for the course, notwithstanding the improvements that you have seen over the years thanks to the proactive actions of staff, and this is something that we recognise as important work for continuing development.

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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