

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:*

Education

Subject(s):

BA English, Language and Education

Programme(s) / Module(s):

EDUC2080, EDUC 3000, EDUC 3009, EDUC3030

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA

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

None noted.

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?

This is a new degree so there are no previous reports.

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 ILOs seem appropriate for the level the course is aimed at. No changes suggested.

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.*

I would say that the ILOs of this programme are comparable to those of other BA degrees of this nature.

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 was impressed by the range and variety of assessment types and procedures. It is clear that the course tutors are using an appropriate and varied approach to assessment and making use of many types of task to reflect the diversity of the modules on offer.

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 overall standards in the sample I saw are high and demonstrate a sound understanding of key concepts. I was especially struck by students' ability to link theory to practice and to draw on both published research and experiential knowledge in their writing. Some of the weaker responses failed to engage adequately with the tasks set and/or made poor use of the literature. The overall marks were high, but I felt appropriate and accurately reflected the abilities of this cohort of students.

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

Not applicable.

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, this is a new programme.

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.

I felt that all the four modules I examined were research led and made extensive use of current literature and recent research studies. It was pleasing too to note that some of the tutors' own work is being used in the modules, a real strength and to observe that research methodologies used (for example in the final year project) are both current and appropriate to the type of action research being undertaken here. I would say that this degree is located very clearly in an appropriate research area and guided by current debates.

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

N/A

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.

I found all the materials which were available to be entirely appropriate, easy to use and transparent. No changes recommended here.

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.

Yes.

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?

Yes.

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, all scripts were clearly marked and demonstrated a useful spread of marks. Feedback from tutors to students is exemplary and students clearly receive excellent feedback which is both formative and summative.

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

Yes, all the final year projects seemed appropriate in terms of both level and content.

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?

Yes, all very satisfactory.

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

There were none noted, but UI believe these procedures are in place and are used where necessary.

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

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the course team and the students, which was a really invaluable aspect of the QA procedure. I believe that this will become an extremely successful degree and would like to congratulate the team for the very high quality of their work and for the time and trouble taken in relation to student guidance and support and to assessment practices more generally. Feedback from the students was excellent and no real concerns were expressed, apart from the timing of some aspects of the degree. It is obvious to me, from conversations with students and from reading their work, that anyone taking this degree is very well-supported and experiences high quality teaching and support for learning. The team are to be congratulated, both academic and support, for the work they have done so far and for setting up what promises to become an excellent degree.

School of Education

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

23 October 2014

Dear

Thank you for your External Examiner's report on the BA English, Language and Education programme. We are pleased with the positive evaluation you have given to this new degree which saw its first intake of students graduate this July. The programme team have worked hard to develop core modules which integrate the development of research knowledge and skills incrementally, from level one to level three, and to provide a variety of assessment procedures that draw on experiential knowledge as well as published research. To have these aspects of the programme acknowledged and welcomed by you is very encouraging.

You note in your report that the feedback from the staff to the students was excellent and that they feel well supported and are experiencing high quality teaching. You also suggest that a concern was raised about the timing of some aspects of the programme. It is true that the programme unusually incorporates two foreign language modules that are taught not by the School of Education but by The Language Centre. These modules are studied over two semesters rather than one, which is also unusual, and, although they are assessed continuously, the assessment load in semester two is slightly greater than in semester one. This can have a negative impact on some students, particularly those who have not done well in semester one assessments. The programme team have approached The Language Centre and are working with them to improve the monitoring and support of the BA English, Language and Education students, who are taking the foreign language modules as a core element in their programme.

Thank you for your encouraging feedback which is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Head of School of Education