

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Education
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>Deaf Education</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	MEd / PG Diploma Deaf Education
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	MEd / PG Diploma Deaf Education

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?

Yes

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.*

The intended learning outcomes for each course in the programme are clearly written and show Master's level skills at level 7.

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.*

Yes. Students who are aiming for the Mandatory Qualification for teachers of deaf children can see which competencies relate to each course in the programme. The aims met these national benchmarks well. In Module 5070 (Education Audiology) the competency 'know a range of informal and formal procedures for monitoring and assessing the communication skills of learners with HI...' would also usefully be an outcome for Module 5072 (Deafness and Development).

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.*

A written assignment is the usual assessment method. Clear guidance is provided for each course about how to tackle the assignment. Very good support is given to students so drafts may be shown to tutors in advance of the hand-in date. The marking is very perceptive and provides positive and supportive feedback to students. The process of double marking is the norm. It would be useful to know at what stage the two markers know each other's mark and how they decide on the final mark. Student performance in the assignments shows that there has been very good support from university and regional tutors. The academic level of the assignments is very good. Occasionally, for example in the area of monitoring spoken or signed language development, there is less evidence of practical skills. The professional skills portfolio (5076) is currently ungraded and perhaps for this reason some students don't spend so much time on it. There are many very useful tasks in this portfolio: a particular strength of this programme is the way students learn to self-evaluate their teaching and communication skills by analysing a video clip. The audiology part of this portfolio could be marked more carefully because it may be the student's only chance to demonstrate practical skills such as checking an audiogram or interpreting speech assessment results.

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 performance of students on this programme is generally very good and compares favourably with the PG Diploma / MEd at the University of Looking at the Critical Studies (course 5075) the best assignments were really excellent, but the ones I saw which received marks in the low 50s were often not at the same level as Master's level passes at my university. I recognise that the University of Leeds is implementing an additional research skills course which will address this issue. The support received by students on this course is excellent – regular access by email, Skype, phone or in person with the programme organiser. It could be that some students need longer to learn the research skills involved. In general the student cohort demonstrate very strong academic skills and in many cases very good practical applications to organising effective teaching, monitoring of progress and learning in deaf education contexts. The integration of practical skills, such as how to carry out an ACE or BSL receptive skills assessment, would enhance the programme.

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 is not involved. The students have one period of placement of 4 weeks in a new workplace and receive 2 visits from a university tutor. I have seen the portfolios but the teaching placement files have not been made available so far, perhaps because they are not graded.

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.

There are many areas of good practice in this programme. The lecturing staff are active and respected researchers who are also interested in trying a range of innovative teaching approaches. The student support provided is exemplary. This was the first full year I have seen this programme. This programme regularly attracts deaf students who are training to teach deaf children and the particular issues surrounding their support and access are very well thought out.

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 very good linkage with research. Here are two examples: the DReaM project encouraging practitioners to become involved in action research around reading comprehension, and leading a joint UK research team to improve ways of including more critical thinking and reflective practice in similar courses from around the UK. Both have clearly had a positive impact on the students' work.

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

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.*

Yes – very clear.

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?

n/a

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?

I have been sent a wide range of student work, clearly marked and annotated and also printouts showing the achievement profile of the student cohort.

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

The choice of subjects is very appropriate. Comments earlier have already raised some concerns about students with grades in the low 50s who perhaps would have gained less than 50 in another university. This may be to do with the Leeds assessment criteria being quite general: the research design criteria for C is that it should be 'appropriate and sufficiently coherent' and data gathering should be 'appropriate and sufficient', whereas at my university the C grade is: 'research question is clear; data collection method is justified but with little evaluation of alternatives; some awareness of data limitations; adequate presentation of findings; some conclusions are drawn.' I would expect marking may be more rigorous for the Critical Study after the introduction of the research skills course.

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, everything was very clearly organised. I attended the Board of Examiners' meetings in June and November 2013. I thought the Board was very responsive to views from external examiners.

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

It was clear where a student was submitting late; all such assignments were sent to me to check.

Other comments

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

Thank you for arranging access to the Virtual Learning Environment. I have now got in so I will also be able to evaluate more of the teaching and learning resources. I have had very good access to student views on both my visits through phone call discussions. Students are generally very happy with the programme. One of the features they like is the possibility of gaining an MEd in two years funded by the employer which other UK university providers cannot match. All the students I spoke to were glad they had chosen the University of Leeds.

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

20 December 2013

Dear

Thanks you very much for this thorough and constructive report. We are very pleased with your feedback about the course delivery, structure, student support and assessment in general. It is helpful for us that you have also noted that we successfully deliver the Mandatory Qualification standards and manage to combine this with clear research-led teaching.

We note the comments about the Portfolio and the Critical Studies. In response to these issues we are changing the Portfolio marking criteria from Pass/Fail to a graded system based on the university criteria. This is being piloted this year. We are also using the new research methods module to ensure that student support for Critical Study design and methodology is consistent.

I am pleased that the dialogue with students and tutors has been useful. Thank you for being flexible on this to enable us to reach our distance cohort.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Head of School of Education