

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:	School of Education
Subject(s):	<i>Special Educational Needs</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Special Educational Needs
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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

Not applicable

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?

Not applicable

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

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 aims and intended outcomes are commensurate with similar MA programmes within the UK. The structure and content of the MA in SEN at Leeds is unique though both in relation to its title and focus and its range of modules. This is a key area of strength and is noted by 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.*

Yes

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 programme offers a range of assessment tasks for each module. This is a real strength in that students can choose an area that is of particular interest to them to examine further. I am particularly impressed by the desire of tutors to also negotiate with students' assignment tasks that are of specific interest to them to.

One module I was asked to review did apply assessments directly to operational contexts within the UK which could have posed challenging for international students. This issue has been discussed with the programme team and a range of tasks have now been introduced. Again this is a strength in the programme team listening and responding to External Examiner feedback.

The range of student performance is good and I have had the opportunity to read the full range of student work.

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.*

Yes, students were able to efficiently demonstrate achievement of the aims and learning outcomes. These are more than comparable with other programmes within the UK.

A strength of the student cohort is the range of international students. This helps students to learn about differing contexts and perspectives. I see no weaknesses with the student cohort

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.

This is a particular and notable strength of the programme team. The staff are very receptive to feedback from students and myself as External Examiner. At the initial meeting in Leeds, I also meet with other examiners on Masters programmes and this is an opportunity to hear how the School has addressed previous reports and feedback.

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.

Research is integral to this Masters programme. Staff also integrate their research into learning and teaching which is welcomed. It is good to see a research methods module being introduced that will be compulsory going forward. The double marking of all final studies is also welcomed.

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, the information is always clearly presented and useful.

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. Information is always clear and I have opportunities to clarify anything with the programme team

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 and comments were taken on board

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 and work was sufficiently annotated.

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. This is a notable strength and the administration team should be congratulated for their efficiency and professionalism

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

Not applicable

28 March 2014

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Dear <>

On behalf of the School of Education and the MA (Special Educational Needs) team, I would like to thank you for your work this year. Your report was very encouraging since you raised no issues of concern. This is important information for us since it is informed by both your own professional knowledge and your discussions with the students. It is worth noting how much they had enjoyed discussing the provision with you.

There was a minor issue this year (13/14) in terms of the assessment for a particular module. Your guidance was invaluable and did open up the opportunities for students to reflect their interests and backgrounds.

As you noted, we will be piloting the research module this year which will enhance the students' understanding of research. All the modules involved looking critically at research in terms of the substantive findings and the methodologies. A strength of the course team is their varied expertise as researchers.

We will convey your appreciation to the administration team who, as you note, are efficient and professional.

This is your final year with us and we are starting to work on identifying a successor so that there is a smooth transition. We will keep you informed of our progress.
We look forward to seeing you at the next External Examinations meeting.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School of Education