

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:	Education
Subject(s):	Education
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Postgraduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Coordination EDUC5830M:Special Educational Needs Co-ordination 1A EDUC5831M: Special Educational Needs Co-ordination 2A
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Postgraduate Certificate

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

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

My experience as an external examiner has been very rewarding at the University of Leeds. The National Award for SEN Coordination was a new programme in my first year and approved by the DfE for 4 years. Few changes have been needed. However, during this time the programme leader and I have developed the course concurrently in our own institutions and our discussions over time have been fruitful and interesting.

I have been impressed by the level of support offered to all students and the quality of assignment feedback has remained consistently high with students benefiting enormously from the formative feedback offered by tutors.

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 the modules I have looked at are appropriate and cover all the relevant elements and standards for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).

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 aims and intended learning outcomes meet the expectations both regarding the national standards for SENCOs and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

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.*

Assessments continue to be academically demanding and highly relevant to students practising in this field. There is a consistent level of student achievement with many students excelling.

The assessment tasks for the SENCO course are directly related to critically analysing, reflecting and developing practice for children with special educational needs and disabilities within the student's own educational setting. This ensures that the assessment tasks are highly relevant and students are well motivated to research underpinning theory in relevant fields. Clear and relevant links between theory and practice in the classroom are evident in assignments.

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.*

Standards of student work are comparable with similar courses of which I am familiar. In my opinion the majority of students make good progress and student retention is high.

Strengths:

- In the best assignments students engage in critical reflection of practice within their school.
- In the best assignments students access a wide range of recent and relevant literature to support their critical reflection.
- In the best assignments students reference their reading accurately according to required academic conventions both within the script and the reference list.

Weaknesses:

- In the weaker assignment writing tends to be overly descriptive describing what they did rather than why.
- Referencing is inconsistent
- Ethics approval – it is not always clear whether students seek ethics approval where necessary to carry out some of their research in their own school setting

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

n/a

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.

None identified/required

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 curriculum content reflects research relevant to the fields of special educational needs. This is further demonstrated through the reading lists provided to students

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.

All relevant documentation was made available to me in sufficient time to carry out my duties effectively.

- 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 appropriate documentation relating to the programmes was sent including marking criteria.

- 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?**

n/a – no examinations

- 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?**

I received sufficient samples of work from each module and in plenty of time to moderate this. Scripts were briefly annotated.

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

n/a

- 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?**

I attended the Examination Board in November 2013. This was conducted in accordance with University regulations and in the usual professional and efficient manner. Students across all courses presented at the Board were treated equitably and all recommendations were reached after appropriate input and consideration from academic and administrative staff and with reference to appropriate regulations. I was satisfied with all the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes – this was discussed as appropriate to each case

Other comments

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

I would like to congratulate the programme team for their hard work and support of students on all programmes of study. The levels of reflection on professional practice is commendable and will undoubtedly impact on professional practice thus contributing to improved outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities in schools/educational settings.

I would also like to thank the administrative staff for all their timely and efficient support during my tenure; it has been very much appreciated.

17 April 2014

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Dear <>

Re: Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Coordination

I would like to thank you for your support to the Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Coordination and, in particular, your recent External Examiner's report. We are pleased that you found your conversations with the staff and students fruitful. As you noted, this was a new programme and there was ample scope for staff to learn from each other across the providers.

Your comments related to the distinctions between more and less strong assignments are well aligned with ours. Given that this is mandatory training at M level, there were certainly some students who were returning to academic study at the same time as taking on a significant whole school approach. We are encouraged by the number of students who have progressed onto the MA(SEN) and there is one who is planning to complete an EdD. You also note the value of this programme to the pupils in schools and that has been at the heart of our programme development.

This is your last year and so we really appreciate your willingness to examine the scripts of the small number of re-submissions.

I will ensure that the administrative staff are made aware of your comments about the efficiency of our systems.

It is with some regret we have withdrawn this programme so we will not be asking you to mentor and support an incoming External Examiner. That said we hope that we can maintain a link with you and your institution.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School of Education