

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:	School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	<i>Breast Imaging (mainly), Ultrasound Imaging (cardiac and MSK), Postgraduate</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	CHE/Cert Mammography programme PGDIP, MSc Breast Imaging (in transition) PGC, PGDIP, MSc, Diagnostic Imaging

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
All urgent matters were discussed immediately and all matters have been successfully dealt with. No new matters need to be entered here or discussed further.

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 has been a very pleasurable experience and the team in Diagnostic Imaging are to be commended. The team in Diagnostic Imaging is dedicated to ensuring that the student experience is an excellent one. The students are given a number of innovative and testing assessments and assignments that bridge the theory/ practice divide in all areas of the curriculum. The graduates are given a wide spectrum of assessments within each module and between the modules offered, that allow them to excel in at least one if not more of the given assessments. The handbooks for each module are well constructed and provide the students with sufficient guidance to complete each module and each assignment. The marking methodologies throughout my tenure have been robust with visible criteria and Rubrics for feedback guidance. The student work has benefited in the main from good comments and feedback for areas of improvement. The marking has been fair and has been justified for most of the student work that I have seen. The standards required for the modules which impact on patient diagnosis and impact clinically on patients have high standards that are not compromised. This ensures that the graduates are fit for purpose and fit to practise at high levels and standards. Some of the modules have altered and progressed the assessments as required by the profession and the professional body, responding to the needs of all stakeholders – this is to be highly commended. The advent of the use of the electronic marking and feedback system within the VLE was only observed in the latter part of my tenure. While this is easy to navigate and much easier from an external examiner point of view (less lost scripts, better turn around times and no need for postage/couriers), there are some points that may need to be ironed out. I found it difficult to

differentiate the first and second markers comments and to see which scripts were moderated. The excellent and robust marking Rubrics and feedback comments on these were no longer visible to me as the external examiner and I found this a deficit.

From an External examiner point of view, I was given advice and guidance throughout, both in written and verbal media. The team discussed all comments that I made and I was given feedback on changes that had been made and where the changes were not made, I was given full and frank feedback. I found this reassuring and all discussions were valuable to me as an external person to the normal processes.

Overall, I would like to congratulate the whole Diagnostic Imaging team including the lecturers and administrators. This is an excellent programme that is highly regarded outside of Leeds University and I was privileged to view this first hand during my years as external examiner.

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.*

As per my previous reports, it remains my opinion that the ILOs are well suited to each of the modules under consideration and that these match the assignments/ course work/ examinations that have been designed. This is true for all adjusted and new assessments and assignments. Most of the students have used these to construct their work and have thus been able to achieve good outcomes and good grades. Clear fails are seen where students have either failed to address the learning outcomes and/or the guidance given for the structure of the assignment/ dissertation.

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.*

These ILOs and aims continue to meet the national benchmarks/ professional body guidance for relevant subjects under review.

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 methods of assessments are generally innovative, well constructed and remain well suited to testing the learning outcomes for each of the modules. The majority of the assessment methods are interesting and challenging. The clinical assessments continue to be challenging and at a level commensurate with the seriousness of possible clinical errors that may arise due to poor performance of the radiographer. Examiners are particularly careful to note where poor practice may be an issue in clinical work and in dissertation work which helps to reduce the theory-practice divide.

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.*

A wide range of marks/grades were seen in each of the reviewed modules, from fails to high grades using the full spectrum of the marking scale. As in previous years there were a pleasing number of exemplary students in a number of the modules. Students were given explicit instructions and a range of learning outcomes for the module to comply with in order to achieve the grades. The wide range of grades suggests that students did have an adequate opportunity to demonstrate their skills and achievements commensurate with these aims and outcomes. I was given a wide range of scripts to view, which allowed the full cohort to be externally examined in one assessment or another.

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

The assessments are challenging within clinically related assessments and assignments. As in previous reports and as above, I note that where the possibility of clinical errors has the greatest implications for practise, students were suitably challenged. In addition, the marking scheme and baseline level of competence is strictly enforced without deviation from minimum competencies.

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.

The transition to the consolidated programme offering of postgraduate diagnostic imaging programme(s)/ modules has been completed and this has been achieved with a minimum of disruption to this excellent programme(s). The range of work that I have seen is wide, ranging from breast imaging to various ultrasound imaging techniques such as MSK and cardiac. The standard between each of the offerings is consistent and the marking is equally robust between offerings and within consolidated modules – this is to be commended and shows the robustness of the marking criteria and Rubrics.

The transition in the latter half of this year to display of the student work on the VLE for the examiners has been a new experience. The electronic presentation of the work allows quicker turnaround times by the external examiner and results in less possibility of the work going missing in the post. However the ability to discern which marker comments are from which marker (i.e. first or second marker) is difficult and the Rubrics are no longer visible to show how the agreement between the first and second marker was reached. The MAB report states that the work was marked and/or moderated but this is not discernable by the external examiner. This does detract from the previously robust marking that has been noted in all of my previous reports. I am certain that given the diligence of the team that this is still occurring so this is not a complaint – merely an observation.

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 and the encouragement to research is evident in all of the work that has been presented to me over this year and in previous years. Students are encouraged to actively seek evidenced based practice in all assessments and to actively bridge the theory/practice divide. The dissertations have been interesting and well researched according to ethical guidelines.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

I have not seen any PhD work from University of Leeds in my tenure as external examiner. I do however believe that the wide range of assessment methods, all of which require robust evidenced based practice, will encourage students to take on further research in the future which may result in practice based/ clinical research PhDs.

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

I have acted as mentor to <> this year. <> is however an experienced external examiner and there were few interactions between us regarding points of order in the programme per se. <> and I discussed a few points via email regarding the university information that <> had received. The arrangements between us were clear and the contact information was clearly stated.

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 information has been supplied on a CD for reference and is available on the website. This information is sufficient and effective. Staff were very willing to answer any questions via email and respond very rapidly to any query.

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.

All information was supplied and updated for this year of external examinership.

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?

All papers and electronic assessment material were made available in advance of the examination time. All questions from the external examiner regarding the material were answered quickly by the examiners to enable feedback to be given prior to the examination date. Changes were made commensurate with the comments and/or negotiated between the examiner and the external examiner.

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?

A high number of scripts/ dissertations were made available to me to ensure/ allow full confidence in the standards of marking, marking range and feedback given to the students. Scripts were clearly marked and annotated (see previous comments on this).

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

These were appropriate and commensurate with learning outcomes/ professional standards and requirements.

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?

All recommendations were appropriate. Administrative arrangements were satisfactory.

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

Students with medical circumstances/ extenuating circumstances were annotated on the mark sheets where the submission had been delayed for course work. I had no need to query any of the grades that were given any special leniency due to circumstances as all marking appeared fair.

Other comments

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

This is my final year as external examiner and I have enjoyed the experience with Leeds University immensely. This is an excellent programme and the team is to be highly commended.

Baines Wing
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

11 February 2015

Dear Dr O'Leary

Re External Examiner's report for the session of 2013-14
MSc/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Diagnostic Imaging

I am writing on behalf of the Programme Management Group for the aforementioned programmes to thank you for your extremely complimentary External Examiner's report for the academic year 2013-2014 and for your hard work and support towards the success of the programmes.

The Group is reassured to note that you consider the programmes to have the required standards for the level of award and that the quality of the teaching, learning and assessments are very good.

The Group is pleased that you have found the use of electronic marking to be helpful to you; it is certainly popular with the students. Your observations on differentiating between first and second marker have been noted by the team and guidance has been sought on how this can be achieved.

The Programme Management Group would like to thank you for your support and constructive external scrutiny of our programmes.

Yours sincerely,