

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:	Leeds Institute of Health Sciences
Subject(s):	<i>Health Informatics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc programme in Health Informatics.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

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

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

N/A. Term of appointment ends 2015

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.*

My views on the overall aims and learning outcomes are unchanged from last year. The programme continues to successfully deliver the intended learning outcomes and is well structured with a good balance of subjects at introductory and advanced levels. It valuably adds to the body of qualified health informaticians in the UK and elsewhere. The standards are commensurate with the qualifications awarded at certificate, diploma and masters level. Evidence of the appropriateness of the programme is seen in the future job and academic success of graduates.

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 curriculum covers all core areas specified as appropriate by international bodies such as the American Medical Informatics Association and the UK Federation for Health Informatics. The level of difficulty and expected student effort is commensurate with that of similar programmes at other institutions. The programme is very much designed with the applied Health Informatics workforce in mind and meets this aim admirably. There is sufficient research and theory to enable a deeper level of insight than a purely skills-based course would be able to offer.

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.*

Based on the written feedback to student that I have seen, I feel the amount and balance of facilitation and criticism is appropriate. The face-to-face format also enables staff to get to know the students' strengths and weaknesses and guide them appropriately. The assignments provide an appropriate means of assessment. Students benefit from being given feedback on their drafts.

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 academic standards are rigorous and consistently applied. The programme mainly targets health professionals and others working in health related jobs and aims to equip them with relevant subject and methodological knowledge that they can apply in their work. The course admirably achieves this objective.

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.

There has been a further strengthening of training in research methods, aided by the links between YICHI and health informatics research capacity within Leeds Institute of Health Sciences.

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.

Students engage with published research reports in most of their modules. Skills in critical appraisal and evaluation are integrated into the curriculum. The final year research projects give students an opportunity to implement this learning and acquire new skills in project management.

Recent research appointments in the Institute of Health Sciences have added to teaching capacity in evaluation methods.

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

No, but I am happy to do so once my term of office ends in 2015

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.*

Appropriate examples of student work and tutor feedback have been given to me and I have also had a chance to read a selection of dissertations. I believe this has been sufficient to enable me to judge the quality and variability of the assignments and marking.

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.*

The programme documentation was shared with me. Access to the university system was arranged for me, at my request, so that I could look at course details more closely, however there has not been an expectation that I will review the curriculum as part of my role. It may be helpful for future examiners to have immediate access so that they can quickly review the content of courses in order to help them comment on its coverage and appropriateness.

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?

No, although I was able to review these retrospectively and found the questions and topics appropriate.

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. I received a selection of documents representing a range of student levels, including the scores and annotations provided by the markers.

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, the paperwork was sent well in advance and members of the teaching and administrative teams were happy to provide further information when needed. I attended the meeting in person and was satisfied with the recommendations of the board. In my view the administration of the course has been extremely efficient.

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

Yes. The teaching staff appear to know the students as individuals and sensitively take account of mitigating personal circumstances.

Other comments

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

The major threat to the programme comes from the need for continuity when the current programme director retires. <>. There are opportunities to move things in a different direction, focused more towards data-driven health informatics research under the new MRC centre led by <>. However there is a risk that this will dilute the important applied focus of this particular programme; therefore finding a way to preserve both the traditional Health Informatics curriculum, whilst growing the new generation of modules focused on data analytics, will be vital. I think both can be achieved with the right team and coordination. I hope that the current director <>, will stay on in an advisory role <>, as <> long experience in the area of applied health informatics will be invaluable for ensuring the programme is grounded in the real needs of the NHS and other health services. <>

**School of Medicine
Faculty of Medicine and Health**

University of Leeds
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Leeds LS2 9NL



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

20 February 2015

Dear

External Examiner's report for Health Informatics 2013-14

As the School of Medicine's Director of Postgraduate Studies, I receive all the External Examiners' reports for the eighteen programmes offered in 2013-14. First, let me thank you for assembling the 2013-14 report for the programmes in Health Informatics.

I note that your report states that there are no matters requiring urgent attention.

Good practice

You commended the Health Informatics team in providing relevant subject and methodological knowledge to students that they can apply in their work. You describe this as admirable.

Standards

You state in the standards section that the learning outcomes and programme content are appropriate for postgraduate study in Health Informatics. Your report indicates that the academic standards are rigorous and consistently applied. You have signalled that the planned development of the programme may lead to a dilution in the applied focus of the programme. Thank you for this comment which will be addressed as the proposals for new modules and programmes are considered.

Administration

You described the administrative arrangements as extremely efficient. I am pleased to note that the electronic access to programme information was helpful for you.

continues...

Director of Postgraduate Studies



Programme Leader's response

I have enclosed with this letter a response assembled by Programme Leader. I agree with your comments about valuable contribution as Programme Leader. I can assure you that the future leadership of the Health Informatics programme is being considered at the highest levels in Leeds School of Medicine and the Faculty of Medicine and Health.

Offer to mentor newly-appointed External Examiner

You have indicated that you would be willing to mentor the next Health Informatics External Examiner following his/her appointment. This is a kind offer which will be accepted by the University of Leeds.

Thank you so much for your report as External Examiner for the Health Informatics programmes. I do hope the Health Informatics team can maintain such a high quality MSc programme.

Yours sincerely

Enc:

19 February 2015

19th February 2014

Dear

RE: Response to External Examiners report (2013/14) – Masters Programme in Health informatics

Thank you for providing us with your report. We are pleased that the programme continues to successfully deliver the learning outcomes and adds to the body of qualified health informaticians. It is good to have it confirmed that the content of the Programme covers all core areas specified by international bodies such as the American Medical Informatics Association. We are again particularly pleased that you feel that the level of feedback given to the students illustrates our high levels of engagement and facilitation and that academic standards are rigorous and consistently applied.

We also for your comments regarding the threat to the programme and the need for continuity. This is being addressed at School of Medicine level and further posts are being advertised, but as you know our field has a huge shortage of experienced health informaticians.

Thank you also for your concern about the risks in diluting the important applied focus of the programme and the need to preserve the traditional health informatics curriculum whilst developing the new data analytics theme. We all understand the need to develop a new strand to the Programme to meet the growing needs of skills in data analytics within healthcare but also appreciate that there is still a huge need, both in the UK and internationally, to continue to develop qualified health informaticians.

As always I and the team appreciate and thank you for your support and advice during this year as our external examiner.

With best wishes

Programme Lead
Masters programme in Health Informatics
Yorkshire Centre for Health Informatics