

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:	Education
Subject(s):	<i>Education</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Masters in Learning and Teaching; MA in Teaching
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA, PG Dip, PG Cert

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

N/A

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

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.*

Aims and outcomes are appropriate to the level of the award.

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.*

Aims and outcomes are comparable in terms of indicative content, scope and learning processes for similar Masters programmes in Education, specifically for those aimed mainly at practitioners.

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.*

Assessment methods are robust and appropriate to the LOs. There is evidence of effective and good quality teaching from the student's work and from the feedback on their work. Feedback is iterative, detailed and includes a clear direction for moving forwards in future assignments. Arrangements for the marking of modules is robust and fair.

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 standard of work on these postgraduate programmes is comparable with similar level work at other universities where I am external examiner. Stronger work shows greater critical engagement and a more robust level of challenge when engaging with literature, research and ideas. Weaker work tends to be more descriptive and follows an uncritical 'what works' approach.

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.

N/A

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 methods and some aspects of research methodology are embedded across modules and there are opportunities for students to develop skills in these areas in different contexts. The team may want to consider how they engage students more deeply with methodology and make the distinction and relationships between this and methods. There is a tendency in weaker work and at dissertation level for work to be data rich and research poor.,

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.*

Access to essential documentation has been good.

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.*

All documentation was received.

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?**

Yes. Annotations on scripts were generally of a high quality.

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

Choice of subjects was appropriate. Weaker work lacked focus in the research question. A writing frame or structure to guide the organisation of ideas and the development of arguments in relation to evidence would help the weaker students.

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?**

Everything was satisfactory

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

I assume so. This didn't come up.

Other comments

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

25 March 2015

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Dear <>

***Re External Examiner's Report: Part-time MA Programmes for Practising Teachers
MA Teaching; MA Teaching & Professional Enquiry; MA Education & Professional Enquiry***

We are very grateful to you for your comprehensive, helpful and supportive report covering the above programmes. Your comments have been considered and discussed by colleagues in detail and will assist us in developing our provision for teachers on our part-time programmes.

We are pleased with your observations on a number of key issues in these programmes. We note that our aims and outcomes are comparable in terms of content, scope and learning processes for similar Masters Programmes in Education, specifically for those aimed at practitioners. Your evaluation of our assessment methods as robust and appropriate is welcome and the comments recognising the evidence of effective and good quality teaching from the student's work and from the feedback on their work is appreciated.

You identify that the stronger work of students shows greater critical engagement and a more robust level of challenge when engaging with literature, research and ideas. However, we agree that the weaker work tends to be more descriptive and follows what you describe as 'an uncritical 'what works' approach'. Revisiting and emphasising the importance of the assignment guidelines and developing the student's use of a writing frame to guide the organisation of ideas and develop the argument structure more coherently will be further reviewed in line with your report. Furthermore the value of the draft feedback in each assignment will be stressed.

Finally, and most importantly we concur with the discussions we had in November and with your report comments on the need for clearer and more focused research questions framed within meaningful and considered methodology. We aim to ensure that research methods and certain approaches of research methodology are more embedded across the first two modules and that the opportunities for students to develop skills in these areas in different contexts will be reviewed and developed. We will consider how all students especially

weaker ones are engaged more deeply and effectively with methodology and make the distinction and relationships between this and methods. Our use of the research methods module EDUC5060M will be central to this development particularly for preparation for the Year 3 critical study and extended research.

We appreciate the time, effort and consideration you have given not only to this helpful report but also to your positive contribution to our discussions on your last visit to the university in November. We look forward to your future observations and evaluations.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School of Education