

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>Deaf Education</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MEd / PG Diploma Deaf Education
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MEd / PG Diploma Deaf Education

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?

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.*

The intended learning outcomes for each course in the programme are clearly written and show Master's level skills at level 7.

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. Students who are aiming for the Mandatory Qualification for teachers of deaf children can see which competencies relate to each course in the programme. The aims met these national benchmarks well.

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.*

Clear guidance is provided for each course about how to tackle the written assignment. Very good support is given to students so drafts may be shown to tutors in advance of the hand-in date. The marking is very perceptive and provides positive and supportive feedback to students. The process of double marking is the norm.

It would be useful to know at what stage the two markers know each other's mark and how they decide on the final mark.

Student performance in the assignments shows that there has been very good support from university and regional tutors. The academic level of the assignments is very good. The team could do more work to make the teaching portfolio marking criteria clearer. It is difficult to see how a grade was arrived at and how many observational visits this was based on (see <> portfolio, seen Nov. 14).

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 performance of students on this programme is generally very good and compares favourably with the PG Diploma / MEd at the University of Edinburgh. Students have now started using the research methods online course materials and this is leading to an improvement in the quality of the dissertations.

Looking at the module objectives of Deafness and Development 5072M, none of the students really showed 'familiarity with various approaches to analysing signed and spoken languages'. As I mentioned last year, the integration of practical skills, such as how to carry out an ACE or BSL receptive skills assessment, would enhance the programme.

The weaker students had not read widely enough; this was not always commented on. Some of these weaker students need further study skills support with academic writing, for example they tend to quote too much and not summarise enough. This was a minority of students, and from this group some have attended additional study skills sessions.

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

Clinical practice is not involved. The students have one period of placement of 4 weeks in a new workplace and receive 2 visits from a university tutor. I have seen the portfolios but the teaching placement files have not been made available so far, perhaps because they are not graded. It would be useful to see more detail about how the observations take place and what students record / reflect on while on placement.

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 are many areas of good practice in this programme. The lecturing staff are active and respected researchers who are also interested in trying a range of innovative teaching approaches.

The student support provided is exemplary and I think has improved over the past year as a result of student comments. Feedback from students by phone, including d/Deaf students, showed that they are confident about the study skills support they will receive and very pleased about the rapid response of the course tutors.

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.

There is very good linkage with research – both the university based tutors are active researchers, and invited lecturers are also active and innovative researchers.

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.

Yes very clear

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

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

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?

Yes, I have been sent a wide range of student work, clearly marked and annotated and also printouts showing the achievement profile of the student cohort.

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

I enjoyed reading the dissertations. The method and standard of assessment was appropriate. The students seem to have benefited from access to online materials about research methods.

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?

Yes, everything was very clearly organised. I attended the Board of Examiners' meetings in June and November 2014. Once again, I thought the Board was very responsive to views from external examiners.

16. 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

12 March 2015

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Dear <>

We are very grateful to you for your helpful and supportive report. Your insightful observations have been shared with course colleagues and these will inform our development of the programme. We are reassured by your many positive comments in particular that you find a clear link to national standards and expectations for the role of the teacher of the deaf. This is obviously extremely important particularly as we accommodate the recent adjustments to the NCSL Mandatory Qualification criteria into the programme. We are also delighted with the response you received from the students regarding the course and that they were confident about the support they received with their studies as well as the speed of our responses.

Your comments with regard to written assignments were particularly pleasing as we work hard to ensure our distance students receive an appropriately high level and quality of support. This includes additional Writing workshops, held in Leeds, for those students identified as requiring extra tuition. We have also strived to ensure the quality of feedback for the assignments has remained consistent and informative as we have extended the number of trained markers available for the modules. The addition of two new markers to the team facilitates moderation and provides a greater depth of experience to inform the students' feedback. We note your comment regarding assignment feedback and will ensure that where a student has undertaken insufficient reading it will be commented on. You enquired about the point at which the second marker sees the comments and marks awarded by the first marker. We comply with the School's Code of Practice for double or second marking by providing the second marker with the annotated script, feedback and mark for confirmation or discussion.

Within your report you asked about the marking criteria for the teaching placement portfolio. The Module 5076 Professional Portfolio, which includes the Teaching Placement Assessment Portfolio, will receive a mark from this academic year rather than just a pass or fail. The assessment criteria have been developed; approved by the School Taught Education Board and piloted during the marking of the 2012-2014 student cohort profiles. A copy of the criteria is enclosed and will be implemented this year. You specifically asked about the completion of the Teaching Placement Assessment Portfolio and we have included a copy of the Placement Handbook we distribute to both students and teacher mentors which provides details of the expectations of the student and assessment criteria that will be used. For the 2013-2014 academic years this was based on the TDA criteria for the ToD qualification and comprised seven standards. This has been extended to eight standards for the current cohort in line with the updated criteria from the NCSL. Descriptors are provided for each standard at each grade. Within each standard there are a range of criteria against

which the student will be assessed. The assessment is made using a minimum of four formal observations, two by the regional tutor, two by the teacher mentor, in conjunction with the informal observations made by the teacher mentor throughout the placement period and the student's placement file. The content of the final report and grade is agreed between the two assessors and written by the regional tutor. The student's placement file is a working document and, therefore, not submitted for assessment. Details of the expected contents are included in the attached handbook.

The final issue you raised was regard to the inclusion of a specific teaching session around a published language assessment. Currently the students are required to undertake a variety of formal audiological, speech perception and listening skills assessments as part of the Educational Audiology assessment: a detailed observation and analysis of a pupil's language use and video and analyse their own language as part of the communication portfolio. Your comment was shared with the regional tutors who agreed that ensuring the students engaged in training to conduct a specific assessment would be an appropriate addition to the programme. They felt that this would be more usefully undertaken within the students' current working context to ensure competence with an assessment they would be likely to use in daily practice. This will, therefore, be incorporated into the programme.

We were delighted to hear that following your discussion with some of our students you report that the support we provide is exemplary and that they feel confident with the advice and help they receive.

We very much appreciate the time, effort and consideration you have given in compiling this report and your positive contributions to the course.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School of Education