

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Education
Subject(s):	<i>Special Educational Needs</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Special Educational Needs
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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

Not applicable

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?

Not applicable

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

In my final year as External Examiner, I have been impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the academic and administrative staff. Throughout my tenure, the Masters in Special Educational Needs is a leading programme nationally and internationally. The academic staff are world leading and the feedback the students give has always been very positive. I have been impressed by the academic staffs attention to my feedback and their readiness to reflect and refine were necessary. I have personally enjoyed my time as External in Leeds and I am confident the programme will go from strength to strength.

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 standards were commensurate with Masters level programmes nationally and internationally. The structure and content of the programme is excellent and there is good flexibility to respond to the diverse needs of students. Students provide positive feedback on the programme and its ability to meet their individual needs.

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, the Masters programme is comparable to the FHEQ.

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 assessment strategy is very good. Students are also able to negotiate some tasks to meet their particular interests. The quality of feedback to students is excellent and it will be useful in feeding forward to future assignments. The range of marks is comparable with what would be expected at Masters level.

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 international mix of the student cohort is a positive feature. It is positive to see opportunities for students to share their international experiences both as practitioners and academics/researchers. The range of marks is comparable to other programmes within the UK

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

Not applicable.

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.

I have been impressed throughout my tenure by the programmes willingness to listen and respond to feedback. There are several examples throughout my time as External that have been taken on board and integrated into the programme. I am also happy to see on occasions the programme team provide a strong justification for not changing an aspect of the course too.

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 is a core influence within the curriculum. I have seen this in module information and in discussion with students. Academic staff are research active (some world leading) and students are very fortunate to be taught by them.

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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 impressed throughout my time as External Examiner.

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?

Yes and academic staff always respond to my feedback in a positive and constructive manner.

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, scripts were sufficiently annotated and gave constructive feedback and feed forward.

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

Yes, the dissertations were varied and the assessment was appropriate.

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

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

9 March 2015

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Dear <>

External Examiner's Report MA (Special Educational Needs)

I would like to thank you for your supportive and encouraging report. Throughout your tenure, you have offered sound guidance and always acknowledged when this was acted upon.

The benefits of having UK-based and international students studying together are enormous. In the next academic year this will be extended as we merge the core modules (EDUC5804M and EDUC5808M). This will enhance the access of both groups to different perspectives.

The observations of yourself and the students about the role of research are very welcome. As you know, we seek to embed research into all our teaching activities and to actively encourage the students to develop as researchers. All new critical study students will be expected to access EDUC5060M Getting Started: Research Questions and Applications in Education and the benefits of that should be evident in their critical studies.

I will pass your comments about the administration of the course including the External Examination boards to the relevant staff. I know that they will appreciate it. They take enormous pride in what they do.

We will miss your input as an External Examiner but I am sure that the team will want to maintain their contact with you.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School of Education