

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:	Faculty of Medicine and Health (Leeds Institute of Health Sciences)
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Postgraduate Programme in Health Research
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PG Cert/Diploma/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 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?

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

Not applicable

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 (ILOs) are clearly specified, as well as the content of the individual modules and structure of the course. The standards appear entirely appropriate for the levels of 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.*

I believe that there is no national subject benchmark for programmes of this nature. That said, the content of the courses, both at certificate and Diploma level provide students with an appropriate level of knowledge and skill in health services research to be able to start their own research and critically appraise clinical papers. There is a natural progression from certificate to diploma, and MSc for students depending on their requirements and motivation.

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.*

One of the strengths of the programme is the structured module assessment process and the detailed feedback that students receive on the marking and their performance. Over the last twelve months this has undergone further revision and improvement with global use of marking rubrics and standardisation as well as precise and detailed student feedback.

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 methods of assessment are entirely concordant with the content of the taught material. Overall the performance of the students was good, and consistent with cohorts from previous years.

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.

Although well established, the curriculum continues to evolve in keeping with recent developments. The modular structure of the certificate course has been restructured to four modules from six. A more qualitative content has been introduced, whilst the proportion of epidemiology has been reduced.

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.*

The nature of the course ensures that current knowledge in research methodology and clinical relevance are examined. <>, the Course Director, is an author of a book on '<>' published by the <> and this is key reading material for the programme along with other material published by members of the team. As qualitative research increases in importance so the curriculum has been revised to reflect this. The material (scientific articles) selected for critical appraisal and analysis are constantly updated to incorporate recently published material.

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

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.

The information provided was generally adequate.

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 appropriate documentation was received, and this is very comprehensive. There is a structured marking process for all modules and structured feedback provided to the student, this is a particular strength of the programme. This year the material provided has been revised and expanded assisting my role and ensuring adequate support for part-time examiners.

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?

The module assessments were all provided, and the nature and questions appropriate. When I have made comments about the course assessments these have always been responded to in an appropriate 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?

An appropriate selection of examined work was made available to me, and the structured manner of assessment for all components of the course enables an external examiner to have a significant degree of confidence concerning the validity of the marking. The standardised assessment material is a particular strength of the course.

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

Yes, dissertations are examined by independent double marking and of a high standard.

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?

The administrative arrangement were satisfactory, with no difficulties concerning working arrangements with the Board of 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

This is a well-established and respected programme that remains of very high quality. It continues to attract a large number of students from a variety of professional backgrounds (particularly cohort 29), and attracts funding from a range of relatively secure streams. Student feedback is excellent. Although this programme has been running for many years it continues to evolve reflecting current trends and the excellent marking standardisation has improved further. The small team delivering the programme are highly dedicated, but the successful continuation of the programme is very reliant on a small core of staff. Further improvement in the complement of academic staffing should be considered by the university. There have been some noticeable issues in administration of the course over the last year due to the lack of sufficient consistent support to the hard working Programme Co-ordinator.

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<>



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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26th February 2015

Dear <>

External Examiner's report for Health Research 2013-14

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

I note that there were no urgent matters for attention. You comment that the academic standards and content of student work are appropriate for the level of award. You report that you were given comprehensive access to student work and assessments.

Good practice

You comment that the structured approach to marking with standardised rubrics for comments and student feedback are strengths of the Health Research programmes.

Programme Leader's response

I have enclosed with this letter a response assembled by <>, Programme Leader.

Thank you so much for your report as External Examiner. Your contributions to the Health Research programme are much valued.

Yours sincerely

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Enc: <>, 6 February 2015

Director of Postgraduate Studies
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Quality Assurance Team

Received 09/07/2015

6th February 2015

Dear

External Examiner report, Health Research 2013-14

Thank you for passing on _____ annual External Examiner report to me. I am pleased, once again, with analysis, praise and kind remarks – especially so because _____ is an assiduous External Examiner.

We are pleased that he has been satisfied with our progressive improvements – ones that have simultaneously improved the student experience and enabled the External Examiner to oversee educational standards. _____ is more than satisfied with our provision – of the postgraduate Certificate within the resource of our core team and the postgraduate Diploma, largely down to a spread of colleagues around the School of Medicine. _____ is happy too with the students' standards and our procedures for their assessment.

_____ has drawn attention in _____ report to the activity of the support staff who work on Health Research; _____ is right to do so because they do an excellent job with limited resource. _____ has noticed, inevitably, that the high standards that observes have been difficult to achieve in this year due to support staff shortages and high turnaround of temporary staff.

I could find nothing in the Report that requires our immediate attention. _____ mentions _____ perception of a need for additional academic time for the delivery of the programme; this is a matter that we are pursuing.

We are very grateful for _____ hard work and careful attention to the Health Research programme. I hope these remarks are helpful and sufficient. If there is anything else that you would like me to comment upon, I am happy to do so.

Yours sincerely

Joint Programme Director, Health Research

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www.leeds.ac.uk/lihs