

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 Science
Subject(s):	Family Therapy/Systemic Practice
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Foundation Course in Systemic Practice (FAMT5310M) 2013/14 Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice 2013/14
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Post Graduate Certificate

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

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

N/A

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.*

I thought this was a rigorous and well-designed Post Graduate Certificate Course that achieved its aims and intended learning outcomes in away that was commensurate with the award, both in terms of academic quality and in terms of the Association of Family Therapy Criteria. The course introduced participants to the concepts and techniques of family therapy and then went on to develop and build on these concepts and techniques. The curriculum and assignments on the course enable participants to familiarise themselves with theory and practice, and gave participants the opportunity to develop recursive theory practice links that had relevance and were applicable to clinical practice. The course also introduced the participants to, and embedded second order ideas relating to the recursive connections between self and the system and personal and professional connections to the work. The course used a wide range of teaching methods including formal written assignments and training through experiential and role-play methods in order to achieve the above.

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.*

In my professional opinion course aims and ILOs are comparable with others similar programmes and competency framework for Systemic Psychotherapy. I was impressed by the rigour and high academic and clinical standard of this course when compared with other similar programs in Systemic Psychotherapy and Practice in the United Kingdom. I particularly appreciate the attention given to the balance of teaching methods in terms of theory and practice. Vocational courses with a clinical emphasis can at often neglect a rigorous foundation in theory and approach, concentrating more on technique and practice. This is not the case with this course. This PG Certificate provides a thorough grounding in the teaching and assessment of theoretical knowledge. I particularly like the multiple choice theory paper in the second year in terms of the rigorous way it assesses the student's familiarity with systemic theory. However I appreciate some of the difficulties the course is having with its on line assessment procedure and support the moves being made to convert this to a more formal written theory exam. The course is balanced in the way it makes ample provision throughout to use this knowledge recursively and in a lived way in relation to technique and clinical practice

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 quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods within this PG Cert course are varied and well thought out and constructed and fit with a course such as this that is working with adult learners with different learning styles and is also about encouraging the development of recursive links between theory and practice.

I was impressed by the overall quality of feedback to all students and with the time given to failing students in terms of positive critique and suggestions about how to approach they're re submissions. Previously my experience has been that more successful students tend to get less

feedback and therefore are given less indication as to how they might develop and extend their thinking, This was not the case in the sample of essays I have viewed across both years. I really appreciated the way as markers you approached the challenge of respecting precious personal narratives whilst offering constructive criticism.

I have also been impressed by some of the ways the course leaders have managed more challenging issues such as plagiarism, paying attention to university regulations and procedure in a professional and well documented manner, whilst retaining a relational and human approach to the difficulties which feels isomorphic to the overall learning aims of the course

I think marking of Post Graduate Certificate work can at times present more of a challenge than marking Masters level work as trainers seek to encourage and recognizing potential within the containment of academic rigor. I think the double marking of your assignments helps to ensure quality and fairness of feedback given and that all markers presented their feedback with skill and sensitivity and I would support the marking conclusions fully.

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.*

As a result of the different teaching, learning and assessment methods on offer within this course, students were provided with many and varied ways in which to demonstrate their learning and development and the standard has overall been high across the course

I did discuss with course tutors whether the positioning of the first essay on the intermediate course needed to be reconsidered coming as it does so early on in the second year and wondered if it came later in the year might if that might provide space to practice/ embed some of the skills around recursive connections between personal / professional narratives?

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

I appreciated the focus in the criteria laid out in assignments and attention paid within the assessment to students ability to make and demonstrate through case material, their understanding and application of theory within their work

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.

As I am just starting out as EE I am not sure as yet how the course is developing over time and will feel better placed to comment on this in the coming year

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.

I think all aspects of the teaching learning and assessment on this course invite students to pay attention to evidenced based practice and research and encourage them to reflect on the place and impact of research on their clinical practice and theoretical understanding

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.

Good online access to guidance and very helpful course administrator

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 I received documentation setting out the course as a whole, the individual modules and specifications and the marking criteria which enabled me to undertake my role.

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

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 a range of assessed work received which enabled assessment of course standards. scripts marked and feedback clear

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

N/A

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 administration has been excellent

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