

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:

Foundation Degree in Professional Studies in Family support
BA (Hons) in Child and Family Studies

Subject(s):

*See below*Programme(s) /
Module(s):Module: LLLC1083 - the development of Child Welfare
Module: Child welfare research policy and practice
Module: Managing the external Environment
Module: management and leadership
Module: Academic skills in family support
Module: Safeguarding Children
Module: Child and family Health module
Module: Violent and sexual offending young people
Module: Child Welfare in Early Years
Module: Advanced work based learning in family support 2210Awards (e.g.
BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA (Hons) in Child and Family Studies

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

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?

N.A.

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

This is my fourth and final year as external examiner to this programme and I remain very impressed with the work of the students and staff alike. The programme at both foundation and BA (Hons) levels continues to grow as an important applied practice programme with strong relevance to workers in the field of family support. It is designed to meet the needs of 'return learners' and 'latecomers' to education and the programme is orientated to fit in with those wishing to complete the programme on a part-time study basis.

Over the last four years I have noted incremental improvements particularly in relation to the standards of written work presentation, and content expression. Importantly in relation to dissertations staff have done excellent work in enhancing the standard of minor thesis in areas such as methodological rigour and better analysis and discussion of findings by students. The programme is successful because of the rich experiences of students in the applied world of practice coupled with the commitment of the course director and team. In sum, the programme continues to meet a tangible need and niche in the market of applied social science with specific emphasis on the study of family support methods.

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 programme is fit for purpose in terms of an applied addressing the specific needs of the student population. The learning outcomes set for student are appropriate and fair. In terms of the governance of the work of students, marking and moderation systems are fine with feedback to students respectful, constructive fair and helpful. There is strong evidence that both the marking sheets feedback and moderating descriptors are being utilized.

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.*

The programme meets national standards and having reviewed similar education programmes elsewhere in the UK and internationally, I continue to be very happy that the programme is of the required standard in every respect

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 methods are very fair and marking with extensive comments provided to students as well as robust moderation mechanisms is most impressive.

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.*

Overall, the academic standard of students work is commendable, particularly given the rich content of knowledge and practice experience that students bring to the programme. The issue of student capacity to write clearly and critically rather than in a poor manner or just descriptively is and will remain a challenge to the course. However I have noticed an improvement in standards in part due to the very proactive actions of the Director and <> team in addressing this issue.

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

Given that students utilise their work contexts as practice placement, there is no clinical practice component relevant to the programme on offer.

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.

From my comments above you will note that I believe that issues raised in previous years have been addressed. On going review of these matters is required into the future and perhaps my views might be shared with the new incoming external examiner if thought to be useful

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.

Students utilise their written work and learning from their lecturers. Similarly, the action research dissertations undertaken by students are of high quality and provide a strong relevance to the field.

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

Not applicable

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.*

Yes

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.*

Yes

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?

Yes

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

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

Yes

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?

Yes

15. 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

Every good wish to all involved in the programme as it progresses into future years and new sets of incoming students

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18th December 2015

Dear <<>>,

External Examiner's Report for 2014-15

Over the last few months we have been reviewing reports from our External Examiners along with feedback from students, including the results of the National Student Survey of finalists and the University's Programme Survey which covers those in other years of study. I am now writing to each Examiner both to respond to reports individually and to give an overview of the outcomes of this annual review.

As always, your report was most welcome and we appreciate the care with which you have reflected on the assignments that you have seen from students and the wealth of experience that underpins your observations. We value your assurance that the programmes continue to be fit purpose with "appropriate and fair" learning outcomes and standards that match those from your experience of other provision both in the UK and internationally. It is good, too, that you find assessment methods to be fair and commend the "marking with extensive comments provided to students as well as robust moderation mechanisms."

The observations that you offer at the end of your four year period as External Examiner for our Child and Family Studies programmes are particularly encouraging. It is not only that you remain "very impressed with the work of students and staff alike" but that you see evidence of constructive development through the time of your appointment. In this respect, you highlight both the growing importance and relevance of the programmes in relation to applied practice and commend "incremental improvements" in the standards of students' written work, especially in dissertations where "staff have done excellent work in enhancing the standard of the minor thesis in areas such as methodological rigour and better analysis and discussion of findings by students." Your concluding observation that "the programme continues to meet a tangible need and niche in the market of applied social science with specific emphasis on the study of family support methods" is most welcome.

In terms of further development, you highlight as a continuing challenge "the issue of students' capacity to write clearly and critically" and we recognise that this remains core to the agenda of teaching staff, especially given our explicit policy of recruiting adult learners from communities that are under-represented in higher education. We are pleased that you have "noticed improvement in standards in part due to the very

proactive actions of the Director and <> team” and will certainly keep up the good work.

Alongside your own report, we have also received observations from our other External Examiners and feedback from students through the NSS and the University’s Programme Survey. We are encouraged to see consistently positive messages from all of these sources and look, of course, both to build on good practice where this is identified and to address any issues that are raised. Please find attached, for your information, a summary of our external examiners’ reports along with our action plan for 2015-16 which captures our student scores and feedback and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

As we look back over the four years of your appointment we are full of gratitude for the support that you have given in your role as External Examiner. You have brought a tremendous breadth of experience and scholarship to the role and a generosity of spirit in both your commendations and recommendations that have encouraged and challenged us to keep moving forward. Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

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Director

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