

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:	Dentistry
Subject(s):	<i>MSc Clinical Dentistry (DPH)</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	DSUR5065M – Research Project DSUR5105M – Principles of Dental Public Health
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	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

There are no urgent matters that need to be attended to before the programme is offered again.

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?

No as this is a new programme.

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 learning outcomes of the programme are appropriate to the level and subject under examination.

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 aims and ILOs are on a par and similar to other Masters Programmes in Dental Public Health with which I am familiar.

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.*

This programme comprises 10 modules, all of which have a summative assessment of varying formats. As a new programme and as a new examiner to this programme, my impression is that the students are subject to a large number of assessments across the 10 modules. I have only had exposure to the 2 modules for which I am examiner, but I believe that the large number of assessments may be in excess of what is normal in other programmes of this nature.

In particular the award of just 40 credits for the Research Project means that the potential of the students to be fully rewarded for this element of the course is constrained. The majority of taught Masters programmes with which I am familiar allocate 60 credits to the dissertation element and consideration might be given to revising the programme to allow more time to be devoted to the research project.

The performance of the students leads me to believe that they have been well taught.

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 modules that I observed being examined allowed the students to fully demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they had acquired on completion of the course.

The small numbers limits my ability to comment on the students as a cohort but the students who presented for examination were well prepared.

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.

This is a new course.

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.

It is clear that the research evidence base is fully utilised in the teaching of the students and that the students themselves learn the principles of research on this programme

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.

I was provided with all of the material that I needed to understand the course and the role that I was expected to fulfil as an 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, I was provided with all of the necessary course documentation and was in fact asked to comment on the setting up of the course.

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?

I did have the opportunity to see and to comment quite extensively on the draft examination questions,. The suggestions that I made were fully taken on board.

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?

I was able to see all presented work and the marking scheme and marks.

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

Yes, the subject matter of the dissertations were appropriate. As indicated above only 40 credits, limits the scope of the project/dissertation, as indeed does the constraints imposed by the effort involved to secure NHS research ethics approval. This inevitably limits the choice of projects that can be undertaken, a problem common to all masters programmes.

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?

I attended the Board of examiners, was able to participate fully and am satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

16. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?

I assume so, it was not necessary to consider these during this round of examinations.

Other comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form

This is a new programme which has been well set up and will clearly settle well over the coming years.

My only issue is the relatively large number of small credit bearing modules, which has the potential to impose excessive assessment burden on students and staff. I appreciate that the programme, dovetails with other programmes and so perhaps the options for modifying this is limited, but if possible, to combine some of the current small modules into a larger module would make for more efficient running of the programme and lessen the assessment burden.

PG -DPH

School of Dentistry

University of Leeds
Clarendon Way
Leeds LS2 9LU

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18 December 2015

Dear

Thank you very much for all of your input to the course this year and for the investment of your time and experience as our external examiner. Your thoughts on the examination content and more recently on the dissertations have been very valuable and has helped us a great deal in this first year of the course.

The suggestions that you have made for alterations to the programme are all very welcome and we are considering each of them carefully to see what changes we can make to improve the programme further. As discussed, a number of these changes are dependent on other programmes but we are hoping to take many of them forward.

The issue of the credits associated with the research module was discussed at our last Postgraduate Programmes Management Committee meeting and a Working Group has been formed to explore what we could do to increase the credit for this module. This will be particularly welcome to recognise the efforts in conducting primary data collection appropriately. The committee were also keen to explore whether the research methods and ethics module could be put together with the research dissertation module to reduce the number of modules and assessments.

Additionally, we are considering replacing one of the Nuffield modules (Foundations of International Health) with an increase to the Principles of Dental Public Health teaching. We could reduce the number of assessments this way and give more time to the dental public health aspects of the course. We would also like to take forward your suggestion of changing some of the summative assessments to formative ones in some areas within the DPH teaching.

Thank you once again for taking such an active role as our external examiner; we are very grateful for all your suggestions. As we take forward the changes we hope that you will have the time to give us your thoughts on them too.

Yours sincerely,

Dean of the School of Dentistry