

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:

Food Science and Nutrition

Subject(s):

Nutrition

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MSc Food Science and Nutrition, MSc Nutrition
FOOD5145M – Nutrition and health
FOOD5147M - Diet and cardiovascular health
FOOD5196M - Food processing and nutrition quality
FOOD5235M – Food and allergic reaction
FOOD5241M – Structure and function of food
FOOD5280M – Functional foods
FOOD4340M – Food and cancer
FOOD5405M – Prof development for employment and research
FOOD5410M – Nutrition policy and practice
FOOD5425M – Personalised and clinical nutrition
FOOD5071M – Research project
FOOD5510M – Applied nutrition epidemiology
FOOD5515M – Nutrition through the life course

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

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

My time as external examiner has been both enjoyable personally rewarding. I felt the comments of the external examiners were taken on board to make for a better student experience. Although I did not meet students this year, it is clear from previous years that they hold the Department/ University in high esteem and enjoy their courses, which is testament to the quality of the teaching and interaction with faculty. The quality of some of the student work and dissertations is commendable.

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 Aims and ILOs are appropriate and the programme is structured to meet these.
The academic standards are appropriate for M-level.

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 comparable with those of other institutions and defined external bodies such as the QAA. Those for the MSc Nutrition are also comparable with those of the Association for Nutrition.

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.*

Overall, the assessments are appropriate for the ILOs. Assessment reports and marking criteria were available for most but not all modules; both are very helpful when reviewing student work. Some specific comments
FOOD5196M - Food processing and nutrition quality. It was not always clear how the marks were allocated as the feedback and marks did not always seem consistent, e.g., wanted more detail but gave over 70% in one question. One student omitted to answer part of a question and got full marks. Overall, I wondered whether there was a tendency to over mark two questions. The module leader may want to consider using a MCQ for facts and another assignment to consider changes in the food chain, risk assessment and regulatory issues, e.g. cereal processing followed by fortification.
FOOD5410M – Nutrition policy and practice. It was not clear whether the campaign designed by the students was underpinned by theory. Demonstrating this more explicitly would be important.
FOOD5510M – Applied nutrition epidemiology. The course work was not very discriminating and the marks quite similar. Students who answered exam question 3, which is fundamental to nutrition concepts, did poorly and the average mark was a fail. The team may want to review the assessment and discuss whether key concepts such as that around DRV should be a compulsory question, especially as this is a core competency for the AfN.
FOOD5071M – Research project. Not all students referred to getting ethics where needed, and stating that this was obtained should be compulsory in the report. It would be helpful to see the marking criteria for the dissertation presentations. While adjudication and checking for academic integrity is done, the processes and outcomes need to be documented. It was not clear whether moderation was done.

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.*

Students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs. Most assessments are by examination. Lab reports and written coursework are also used. Collectively the methods test the different ILOs. The arrangements for marking appears good and there is consistency where double marked.

Overall, the average marks for one module was at distinction level (and higher than in previous years), for five modules at merit level and for four modules at pass level, with standard deviations between 8 and 13.

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

N/A

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.

FOOD5405M has been reviewed in light of the comments made last 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.

The curriculum and learning is contemporaneous, as evidenced by the subject matter and dissertation projects.

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.

Yes, all material required was provided.

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.

These were available at each visit.

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 was provided with draft exam paper for FOOD5235, FOOD5196, FOOD5515, FOOD5340.

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, all the manuscripts were available for review. There was a delay in sorting the dissertations and marking sheets. It would be helpful to the external examiners if students spiral bound their dissertations, the programme was clearly identified on the front page and the marker sheet was put inside the cover.

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

Yes, a good array of topics was covered.

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?

Both Exam Boards were run efficiently and effectively.

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

Unfortunately, students were too busy with their dissertation projects to meet with us, although the meeting was planned and arranged.

School of Food Science and Nutrition

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W www.food.leeds.ac.uk**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**25th January 2016

Dear

Thank you once again for the sterling work that you have carried out as External Examiner and thank you for agreeing to serve for a further year.

Thank you for the many positive comments concerning the standards, including the appropriateness of the ILOs.

It was disappointing that not all assessment reports and marking criteria were unavailable at the time of your visit. The School is refreshing our examination procedures and the provision of all reports and marking criteria will be addressed. Your specific comments concerning FOOD 5196M, FOOD5410M and FOOD5510 will be raised in the module reviews and your points will be addressed. The School has appointed a small team to consider the present assessments used in the School and your comments will be given to that team to use in their deliberations.

All supervisors will be instructed that it is a requirement, where appropriate, for all students to both obtain and refer to ethics in their reports. The marking criteria for the research dissertations presentations will be made available for your next visit, along with the full Code of Practice an Assessment where it is included as an appendix. As part of a Teaching Enhancement Scheme on examinations, the School is addressing the provision of standard reporting with transparent disclosure of any moderation considered or carried out.

The examiners did note the variable average marks for the different modules this year, and believe that it was a result of this particular cohort with the students displaying similar strengths and weaknesses.

It was unfortunate that few students felt that they had time to meet with you during your visit, and the School is considering ways in which to encourage attendance in this academic session.

Once again thank you for your valuable input and for agreeing to continue for a further year. I look forward to meeting you once again during your forthcoming visits.

Yours Sincerely,

Head of the School of Food Science & Nutrition