

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:	Medical Education
Subject(s):	<i>Medicine</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Year 1/2 Medicine
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

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

I have always been very impressed by the Leeds team and their focus on excellence in medical education. I started shortly after the introduction of the new curriculum, and this bedded in very well. Sensible, proportionate changes have been made over the course of my tenure and these have always been appropriately justified and discussed. Whenever I am asked about Leeds by colleagues or prospective students I am always very positive.

Standards

- 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.*

Fully commensurate. There are high expectations of the students and this is appropriate for their stage of medical training.
- 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.*

Yes. Leeds students are clearly highly comparable with other medical schools. The course is clearly tailored to, for example General Medical Council outcomes for medical education.

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 split of formative and summative assessment is excellent. Students have to achieve smaller tasks throughout the year and build up to an integrated summative exam – this keeps a check on their progress without overassessment. There is a good range of different types of assessment.

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.*

Yes. Through the integrated summative assessment, there is a good range of marks and students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their excellence.

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

Campus to clinic is an important component of the course. Early clinical experience is an expected part of undergraduate medical education and the learning and assessment for this module is appropriate.

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.

Ongoing changes seem well thought through, for example the reworking into the module body systems. This will, am sure, make better sense to the students and seems appropriately assessed.

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.

Leeds has a good reputation for medical education research and it is clear that the team are well informed about best practice in medical education and that this informs the design of the curriculum and assessment.

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.

Yes, really good material and staff always responsive to questions and clarifications.

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, and updates were regularly sent as components of the course changed.

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. Questions were clear and with an appropriate range. Any comments made were dealt with and responded to.

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?

Because of the nature of the assessment, it was not possible to scrutinise assessed work.

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

Not applicable.

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?

Excellent procedures. The module meetings mean that all assessment results are reported in a very transparent way, giving a lot of confidence in the process. Psychometrics and analysis of the integrated exam are thorough and robust. Exam boards are detailed and open, all are given opportunities to contribute and there is opportunity for reflections on improvements going forward.

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

Yes. This was dealt with by a separate panel and reported at exam board. This was always presented with thoughtfulness and discretion, and procedures seem robust. In terms of student academic support. It is clear that there is really good support for those who fail assessments. I think it would be helpful to also consider the bare fail students as they might also need really intensive support.

Other comments

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

Thank you for all the support over the last 4 years – I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the Leeds course and contributing to discussions.

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:	Leeds Institute of Medical Education
Subject(s):	<i>Basic medical sciences</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Years 1 & 2 MBChB course
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MBChB

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**Completed report**

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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?

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 was meant to be my last year as external examiner, however I have been asked to extend this for another year. I was very happy to agree to this. My experience as external examiner on the MBChB course at Leeds has been a very positive one. The staff are constantly looking for ways to improve the delivery and assessment of the programme and the students get an extremely fair hearing on a case by case basis in the exam board meetings. The administration is always handled swiftly and thoroughly.

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 aims and ILOs this academic year appear to be commensurate with Y1 & 2 of a medical degree programme, and are achievable from the content of the programme.

- 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.*

Yes, the aims and ILOs appear to meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark, and are appropriate for the level of Y1 & 2. These are similar to other medical schools of 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.*

The assessment methods employed at Leeds Medical School are appropriate to the programme and the students do not appear to be over-assessed. In-course assessments, written examinations and spotters are appropriate to meet the ILOs of this programme.

The School employs the Ebel method for standard setting written exams. This is an appropriate and defensible method which appears to be carried out in a clear and transparent way, even presenting the tables in their exam board minutes. From the low failure rate of the students (which is certainly comparable with our institution) it is apparent that the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment methods are excellent. Failed Students get a fair hearing in the exam board meetings with full and frank discussions within the board.

- 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.*

Unfortunately I didn't get to meet any of the students this academic year, or see examples of their work, but the spread of pass/fail students is comparable with those at my institution, and I believe did not show anything unexpected.

- 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.

This year the IMS exam changed from one end of year exam to three in course exams with a cumulative pass mark of 50%. This reduced the pressure on the students during the end of year exam period and had the added bonus of reducing the amount of students missing from lectures in the last couple weeks of term.

A new module, Body systems, was created by amalgamating Core body systems and nutrition and energy. I'm not sure how this change affected the programme.

- 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 appears to be research-led where appropriate. There are some good examples of students being taught transferrable research skills and actually putting these into practice by researching a chosen topic and presenting the results to a small group.

- 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.

The material I was given access to (study guides etc) was sufficient for me to complete the task required of me and were sent to me in good time.

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.

The documentation I received was appropriate and adequate.

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?

Once again I was sent all the examination papers in good time this year, I am always impressed by this. As usual there was a good spread of difficulty and relevance levels in each written examination, and the EMQ and MCQ papers appeared to be well balanced with a good representation of all aspects of the course at that level. The process seems fair and equitable, and carried out conscientiously.

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 did not have any access to the student's work.

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?

I could only attend the Y1 exam board meeting this year due to personal circumstances (injuries). The administration arrangements were completely satisfactory. The operation of the meeting was very clear and logical. I was satisfied with the Board's recommendations. An agenda ahead of the meeting would have been helpful, although as this is my fourth year I knew what to expect.

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

Yes, I was satisfied that this was a fair process.

Other comments

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

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:	Leeds Institute of Medical Education
Subject(s):	Medicine
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Integrated Summative Examination for the degree of MBChB
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MBChB

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**Completed report**

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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?

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

I'm unsure if this is the final year of my appointment since I was on maternity leave at the start of my appointment (24/10/2012) and was unable to fully contribute until 24/05/13 when I first commented upon draft exam papers.

However, in that time I have been consistently impressed by the efforts of the University and its staff to deliver a programme of exceptional quality. The induction at Leeds is the best I have experienced to date; documentation is available and administrative processes are straightforward, every effort is made to ensure external examiners understand the programme, meet the academic team and the students.

The dedication of the team to the deliver an excellent course and experience for their students is very evident. The medical students I met were clearly enjoying the course and appreciated the efforts of both academic and administrative staff in delivering such a high quality course. There is an obvious commitment to improve the learning experience for students and to continue to develop the programme. Providing excellent pastoral and academic support appears to be a priority for staff. It is clear that the quality of the teaching and the learning environment is excellent.

The academic standards set by Leeds are in line with the QAA benchmark statements for medicine. The standards achieved are high, in my experience and compared to other UK medical schools. The assessment processes are robust and rigorous and decision making processes are transparent.

It has been a pleasure to contribute in my role as external examiner.

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 can confirm that the Aims, ILOs are appropriate for the MBChB Programme for year 2 medical students. In my opinion they are suitable for continued progression towards the award of MBChB.

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 confirm that the Aims, LOs and assessments meet the national subject benchmark and that the standard of these at Leeds is aligned to the standard set at my own Institution (Newcastle University) for year 2 Medical Students.

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 Integrated Summative MCQ and EMI assessments are effective assessment tools and there is good evidence of appropriate standard setting. These assessment methods are also employed in my own institution and others I have examined in. Details on the grading criteria were discussed at the exam board meeting and, as always, were entirely satisfactory.

In addition, I would like to compliment the team on the retention of the anatomy spotter examination. This assessment tool is constructively aligned to the teaching methods/resources used and, whilst the spotter exam is a labour-intensive assessment in terms of setup, it is a powerful driver for learning anatomy.

I think the in-course assessment in Laboratory and Scientific Medicine is excellent and encourages regular engagement with the module content.

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 this cohort performed well. There were only a very small number of students who under-performed. For the most part, these students had mitigating circumstances and concessions were applied at the BoE where appropriate; only 1 student appeared to be underperforming due to a persistent lack of motivation.

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

Assessments for ensuring competency in clinical skills appear to be robust.

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.

The effectiveness of tutoring system at Leeds is commendable. The approach to tutor support at Leeds was explained to me in at induction. It was evident in the BoE when discussing students in difficulty that Tutor support at Leeds is exemplary and that the tutoring system works well.

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.

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, I was given an induction pack initially and I was able to access guidance online and contact the Exam office staff whenever I needed to.

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, this was made available to me on induction and I have access to the online resources for reference and updates.

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 am always impressed by the efficiency of the examination administration for this Programme. I received the draft papers in good time:

I received (07/05/15) and reviewed (22/05) the Year 2 Integrated Summative MCQ and EMI.

I received (07/05/15) and reviewed (11/06) the Year 2 Integrated Summative MCQ and EMI resit papers.

The Examination questions were of an appropriate standard/level and tested the prescribed content. There was a spread of clinically applied questions which covered the breadth of the year 2 curriculum,

I did identify a duplicate question, a few minor errors to text and images, however, I did miss one error, for which I apologise. My comments were received and considered.

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 did not see assessed or examined work this year.

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 I was able to attend both BoE meetings (23rd June and 3rd September 2015). The administrative arrangements were excellent as always, the documentation is easy to follow, the meetings run to schedule and were expertly Chaired by <>.

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

Yes, this was evident at the BoE. The details of individual student's mitigating circumstances remain anonymous, but even without this detail, the rigour of the system is evident and I am confident that appropriate decisions are made.

Other comments

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

Staff reported an irregularity in the examination/invigilation process and that the time taken to resolve the issue exceeded that recommended in the University guidelines. The outcome was that the examination had to be rescheduled.

The matter was handled appropriately by the lead academic at the time and in accordance with the University regulations. Students were consulted regarding the possible solutions and the exam was rescheduled promptly.

The team felt that the disruption to students caused by rescheduling of the examination could have been avoided and thus, they were taking this matter forward at University level. I agree with the actions taken by staff in this case and I hope that they have managed to explore alternatives to cancelling the exam should a similar situation arise.