

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:	School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	<i>Counselling</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory HECS 3193 Introduction to Counselling Skills and Theory HECS 3194 Developing Counselling Theory and Applications
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	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

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 appointment will be ending as this course is not being offered again. I have very much enjoyed being the examiner for this course and have been impressed with the quality of teaching, marking and students' work and progress. It is a shame that this course can no longer be offered but I understand that the staff team are developing new approaches to counselling skills and may be integrating these into modules across a range of courses in Healthcare.

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 ILO's are appropriate to the modules and relevant for the award under consideration.

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.*

QAA benchmark standards apply to degree level courses (level 6) in counselling and psychotherapy so do not specifically relate to this course. However, the learning outcomes of this course relate to the relevant subject specific skills. Sufficient weight is given to practical competence in counselling skills as demonstrated with a peer.

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.*

Assessments are in keeping with the award. The feedback given by tutors is focused and developmental and highlights how students can develop further. Clear criteria are used for assessments which are transparent. The full range of marks was used in assessment. Overall student performance indicates a high quality teaching and learning experience, as in previous years.

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 cohort examined during 2014-15 demonstrated a high standard of performance for an introductory level course and this continues to reflect well on the teaching of this course. This compares well with other courses at a similar level. Students are encouraged to be reflective and to integrate theory with practice. Some students demonstrated insightful, complex and clear articulation of their reflections and a sophisticated appreciation of theory. The course has provided an excellent foundation for those progressing to the master's level course, I understand that more of the content and skills practice will be included in Year 1 of the MA from now on, and that students will be accepted for the MA who do not necessarily have a certificate in counselling but have the potential to develop. This will have implications for the support to be provided by the staff team on the MA programme.

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.

Tutor feedback was detailed and full and students were very much encouraged in their development.

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 were able to draw on research findings in their assignments and the team are informed by current research and developments in counselling practice. The course team are actively engaged in 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, full information was provided. On appointment I had the opportunity to attend an induction meeting which was informative and well organised. Extensive paperwork was provided to assist in my role. Help in accessing the VLE was readily available.

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, full information was provided.

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?

All work was made available. Detailed and specific comments were made by markers in giving feedback to students, and this was easy to access and view using the VLE.

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 attended a Board meeting in September 2013. I was satisfied that the meeting followed the required procedures. I was not able to attend in 2014.

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

I have not had the opportunity to meet with students this year due to my own sickness absence at the time we had planned this, although I did so in 2013. The team have made it clear that I am welcome to do so at any time. I have been in contact with the team about the future changes to the courses offered.

School of Healthcare

Baines Wing
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Direct line: 0113

E-mail:

26 November 2015

Dear

Re External Examiner's Report 2014-2015 - Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory

I should like, on behalf of the team, to thank you for your report as external examiner for the Certificate in Counselling Skills and Theory programme for the 2014-2015 session. As this is the last cohort of the programme, the team and I would also like to thank you for all your work and commitment during the three years of your appointment. The Certificate has been a highly successful programme and the team is justifiably proud of it. It is hoped that the teaching of counselling skills can be extended across other disciplines within the School.

The team is encouraged by your comments on the 'focused and developmental' feedback offered to students and the 'high quality learning and teaching experience' indicated by student performance. You note that the course provides 'an excellent foundation' for progression to the MA Psychotherapy and Counselling programme, and this year three students from the Certificate have begun the MA programme while two more have been accepted but have chosen to defer entry. You note the implications for skills teaching and support during the MA programme as the Certificate is no longer being offered as a foundation; this is an issue that the team is seeking to address with the new intake to the MA, and the team is very mindful of the additional input students need in skills development.

The team is sorry that you were not able to meet the students this year due to sickness.

I should like to thank you for your collegial support of the team during your term of appointment, which has been greatly appreciated by the team.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely