

**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:	Medicine
Subject(s):	<i>Molecular Medicine</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<i>Molecular Medicine</i>
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](mailto: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*

(not applicable)

**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*

(not applicable)

## 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 agree that the ILOs were well-framed and at the standard expected for a master's level qualification in this subject.

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 am not aware of any relevant benchmarks.

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.*

I thought that a good range of assessment methods was used, and that the assessments worked well to allow students to demonstrate their level of their knowledge and understanding. The methods of marking were appropriate and well-coordinated in practice.

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.*

All students completing the course achieved at the merit level or above, but this headline classification conceals a wide range of achievement in the marks awarded. The overall assessment process clearly did a good job of stretching and challenging the students, and the very best performances were at a truly impressive level that was fairly reflected in their marks.

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.*

I have provided more detailed feedback on individual components of the course during the academic year, and these more detailed points have been considered as part of the ongoing review of the programme. The programme management team engage with me in a very positive way to ensure that my comments receive due consideration and are included in the future modifications made to the programme. More specifically, I am satisfied that good responses have been made to the points I raised in last year's report, and that the changes made appear to be effective. These included simple but important practical steps, such as (where feasible) reducing the number of examiners, to ensure that the marking processes are as uniform as possible across the cohort.

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.*

This degree depends for its success on a considerable component of material relevant to the practice of research, including a substantial Research Project module. Both from my conversations with students and my evaluation of project outcomes, it is clear that the projects offered are at the expected advanced level, and that they are effective both as a medium of instruction for the students, and as valuable research experiences in themselves.

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 received clear and extensive guidance from the University, and the School liaised closely with me during the course of the academic year. As a result, I feel that these bodies have actively helped me in my role 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. A full programme handbook and other relevant material was made available to me, and details of assessments and marking criteria were clear from the material available to me on SharePoint.

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. The SharePoint resource allowed me to have very detailed and direct access to the assessments and the students' responses to them.

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?

Although this may not be feasible with a larger cohort size, this year I was able to review *all* work submitted for assessment during the year, and in most cases I made my own independent evaluation of them to compare with the marks awarded. I therefore feel that I am in a very strong position to confirm that the standard and consistency of marking was appropriate. In all cases I found that the assessment marking was documented to a very high standard.

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

Students were assigned to projects based on individual choice, and students were able to do projects that matched their interests and aspirations. Both the level of difficulty of the projects themselves, and the methods and standard of marking of the project outputs, were set at an appropriate level.

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?

The Board of Examiners, at which I was present on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015, was well planned, carefully organised, and conducted with due attention to the fair assessment of the students' work. I am completely satisfied that all the recommendations for awards made at that meeting were reliable, and in keeping with the University's regulations.

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

The meeting of the Board of Examiners included explicit consideration of students with mitigating circumstances, and as one would expect these had been ruled upon by an independent body. In the individual cases in question, I was wholly satisfied that due allowance had been made for their mitigating circumstances.

**Other comments**

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

Throughout the year the administration of this programme has been exemplary, and the programme management team have been assiduous in involving me in all important arrangements, drawing my attention to work available for my review, and responding positively and constructively to my detailed suggestions.

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

9 October 2015

Dear

**External Examiner's report for Molecular Medicine 2014-15**

Thank you for submitting your second report for the Molecular Medicine programme at the University of Leeds.

I note that there were no urgent matters for attention. You comment that the academic standards and content of student work are appropriate for the level of award. You report that you were given comprehensive access to student work and assessments and the administrative arrangements were exemplary.

Your report highlights the response made by the Programme Leader to your report for 2013-14. I was pleased to note that there was a reduction in the number of examiners in 2014-15.

**Programme Leader's response**

I have enclosed with this letter a response assembled by \_\_\_\_\_, Programme Leader. \_\_\_\_\_ details the action taken in response to your 2013-14 report.

**Influence of research**

I note that you had the opportunity to meet with the students and experienced their enthusiasm for the research they conducted. You state 'it is clear that the projects offered are at the expected advanced level, and that they are effective both as a medium of instruction for the students, and as valuable research experiences in themselves'. Thank you for acknowledging the importance of research in taught postgraduate programmes.

Thank you so much for your report as External Examiner. Your contributions to the Molecular Medicine programme are much valued.

Yours sincerely

Enc: 1 October 2015

**Director of Postgraduate Studies**





**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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01 October 2015

Dear

**MSc Molecular Medicine 2014-15**

**Report of External Examiner,**

is the External Examiner for the MSc Molecular Medicine and was appointed on programme approval and prior to the start in September 2013. The MSc Molecular Medicine was delivered for the first time in 2013-14.

does not have any major comments for attention on the MSc Molecular Medicine course in examiner's report.

**Standards**

I am pleased to say that found the course delivered on its Intended Learning Outcomes. found students had the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding thanks to the variety of assessments offered. Overall found that the programme challenged the students at the standard expected for a master's level qualification.

especially commended the opportunity given to students to perform a substantial research project and noted that "the projects offered are at the expected advanced level and that they are effective both as a medium of instruction for the students, and as valuable research experiences in themselves".

provided the programme management team with some minor comments that were addressed whenever possible throughout the course of the programme. was satisfied with the consistency of marking applied in 2014-15 as research proposals and research projects were second marked by only two markers, and project presentation and posters were each marked by only two markers. noted that reducing the number of examiners would “ensure that the marking processes are as uniform as possible across the cohort”.

### **Examination Process**

was satisfied with the ease of access to assessment material and supporting documents of the programme via the SharePoint site. noted that “the standard and consistency of marking was appropriate” and that “assessment marking was documented to a very high standard”.

noted that appropriate procedures in place gave due consideration to mitigating circumstances and that was satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners.

was pleased with the administration of the programme.

We are grateful to for report and helpful comments. We look forward to working with in future years.

Yours sincerely

*Programme Leader  
MSc Molecular Medicine*