

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):	Medicine
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MRes Medicine
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MRes

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

(N/A)

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

(N/A)

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 overall aims and intended learning outcomes for the programme are highly appropriate to medical students undertaking an intercalated year of intensive scientific study.

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.*

(not relevant)

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.*

Some of the taught elements are shared with other programmes, and have assessments scrutinised by other external examiners.

MEDS5020M Paper Criticism: After undertaking independent evaluation of the MEDS5020M Paper Criticism exam, I found that I generally agreed with the marks awarded. However, while the students seem to have coped well with the challenge, there is very little to choose between them, partly because many of them seemed to have adopted a very systematic, almost mechanical approach to addressing the question of publication. This is reflected in the observation that the marks from the two examiners are nearly all in a restricted range, and are not significantly correlated with one another ($r^2 = 0.12$). One might see this as a group of well-trained students coping well, or alternatively as an assessment that does not stretch and challenge. One approach to putting students more specifically "on the spot" would be to ask specific questions, in addition to the overall "publish/reject" question. For example, one might ask students to explain what data were used to draw figure 2, and the conclusions that might be drawn from it; alternatively another specific (but still quite broad) question would be to ask students to explain the statistical justification for the main claim made at the start of the Discussion section. In terms of documentation, I was pleased to be able to review the annotated scripts and the detailed comments from each marker. In general terms I view this module as an extremely valuable part of the programme, adding an important extra dimension to the student experience.

MEDS5010M Research Project in Medicine: Throughout the year the available materials on SharePoint allowed me to make extensive independent appraisal of project assessments and the marks awarded. I thought that the project work was marked carefully and transparently, and I have no worries about the fairness of the overall outcome. The varied assessment formats allow students to demonstrate different dimensions of their relevant skills. I nevertheless offer some suggestions about this assessment for consideration by the programme organisers.

1. *Marks for project work:* Although there are several different components of the project assessment already, there is no point at which the student's individual effort and achievement in the project work is evaluated and rewarded. I would suggest that some part of the large fraction currently allotted to project report marks should be diverted to allow a mark from the supervisor for this aspect. This would have the secondary effect of allowing the project report to be evaluated purely as a report, without any contamination from other considerations (see 2 below).

2. *Standard of project report marking:* I found that I was in good agreement with the *relative*

merits of the project reports, but found that overall, the absolute mark I would have awarded was on average about 4% lower than that actually awarded. I suspect that the marks awarded by supervisors for the report may have involved an allowance for the student's effort and achievement (see 1 above), and again I would suggest that this element should be explicitly assessed separately in the project evaluation.

3. *Credits – who did what?*: Only one project report explicitly listed what procedures were undertaken by others, and which by the student in person. All projects involved contributions and support from others, and to enable fair evaluation of the student's individual contribution, I would suggest that future project reports should require a cover page documenting the work undertaken on the student's behalf by others.

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 the combination of modules and the methods of assessment give students adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement. I had the opportunity to hear seminars from all students, and to talk with most of them, and it is clear that the programme allows these very able and highly motivated students to thrive in a research setting.

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.

I made no substantial suggestions for modifications last year, and at that point there was only a single student; the most obvious change this year has been the increased number of students (now 7). It is clear that the programme has coped very well with the increased numbers.

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 is a research-intensive programme, and in particular, on the basis of the reports, seminar presentations and discussions with the students themselves, I would judge that the Research Project experience has allowed students to undertake original projects at an advanced level, and to receive excellent support from individual supervisors.

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, this material was useful and sufficient.

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, all this documentation 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?**

This only really applies to the Paper Criticism module, but in this case I did indeed receive the exam paper for comment in advance of the assessment.

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?**

The SharePoint site is very valuable in allowing me rapid and full access to student work and the annotated materials and examiners reports. The marking process is fairly conducted, and well documented.

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

Students were able to select projects and all appeared pleased with the outcome of that allocation process. The topics were at an appropriate level. I thought that the method and standard of evaluation was generally appropriate, subject to the comments made above (section 3).

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 administrative arrangements for this degree operate at a very high level, and are a beacon of good practice. Perhaps this is a little easier to arrange for 7 students than for a larger cohort, but I can only praise the standards of accuracy and attention achieved. <> as course organiser and <> as course administrator kept me in regular contact through the year and were able to direct my attention to detailed material and considerations through the year. I was able to attend the Committee of Examiners meeting on June 23rd 2015; that process was impeccably organised, fairly conducted and accurately and fully documented.

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

Yes. The consideration of students for the final award included an instance of mitigating circumstances, and I thought that this aspect was dealt with fairly, thoroughly and transparently.

Other comments

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

This course expanded from 1 student to 7 from its first year to its second, and is set to expand further (to 13/14) in its third. I think it is deservedly popular among medical students, and is very well prepared to maintain the standard of the student experience in this larger cohort.



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6 July 2015

Dear

**MRes Medicine 2014-15
Report of External Examiner, Professor John Armour**

is the External Examiner for the taught postgraduate programmes in Medicine (MRes) and Molecular Medicine. This is the second report has prepared for the MRes programme. will prepare a separate report for the Molecular Medicine programme.

I note that has reported that there are no urgent matters for attention in the MRes Medicine course.

Research Project

The Programme Team are grateful for comments on assessing the student's performance during the project. We agree that this is an appropriate approach to assessment and we will amend the module to incorporate a supervisor assessment of performance. To ensure consistency of marking we will appoint a deputy Programme Leader who will mark components of the Research Project including the final oral presentation. I aim to model the new assessment on existing good practice in the MSc programme.

We have refreshed the guidance issued to students on how to present the Project Report. It now includes a statement on contributions by members of the research team.

continues

Paper Criticism

comments on specific questions in the Paper Criticism examination are well made and we aim to implement this approach in future years. states, "I view this module as an extremely valuable part of the programme, adding an important extra dimension to the student experience".

Standards

I am pleased to note that reports that the aims of the MRes are "highly appropriate" for the target cohort. comments "it is clear that the programme allows these very able and highly motivated students to thrive in a research setting"

Examination Committee

comments that the administration was excellent. The meeting of the Committee of Examiners was well managed. considered that the mitigation case was appropriately handled.

We are grateful to for report and positive comments. We look forward to implementing the changes and to recording the impact on the students' experience.

Yours sincerely

*Programme Leader
MRes Medicine*

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

8 July 2015

Dear

On behalf of the School of Medicine, I am responding to the report that you submitted as External Examiner for the new postgraduate programme, MRes in Medicine.

At Leeds Medical School the normal process is for the Programme Leader to prepare a response to the External Examiner's report and for the Director of Postgraduate Studies to formulate a response on behalf of the School. is both the Programme Leader for the MRes programme and the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies. has suggested that I assemble the School's response. I enclose comments on your report.

I noted the positive comments in your report and was glad to learn that you had access to assessments and that the administration was exemplary. In 2015-16, there are 13 students registered for the MRes Medicine programme. You note that the programme is deservedly popular among medical students.

You have made some suggestions for enhancements in assessments and on standards. In response, has indicated how these will be incorporated into the relevant modules. I can confirm that the growing cohort of students will benefit from implementation of your comments.

Yours sincerely

Director of Student Education,
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Enc:

Director of Student Education

Director of Postgraduate Studies

