

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:

IDEA/CETL

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

IDEA3301 Reasons, Virtues and Obligation
IDEA3304 Conscience, Codes and Professional Issues
IDEA3305 Autonomy, Rationality and Psychiatric Issues
IDEA3306 Distributive Justice and Scarce Medical Resources
IDEA3307 Current Developments in Health Care Ethics
IDEA3312 Ethical Issues at the Beginning of Life
IDEA3313 Ethical Issues at the End of Life

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BA Biomedical Ethics

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

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.*

This point is unchanged from last year: the modules seemed highly appropriate for the degree, and the ILOs for each module were also apt. I found no problems with these – they seemed very well thought-out.

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.*

It is clear to me that the applied ethics and philosophy being done on these courses is of a high standard. The approach taken by IDEA is distinctive, in the sense that many of the students do not have a philosophy or ethics background, and the philosophy has to be taught in such a way that it speaks to students coming from e.g. medicine, about the problems they face and the ways in which those problems can be addressed through philosophical study. That makes it hard to compare IDEA courses to those of other institutions. However, the IDEA curriculum seems to me well thought-out for its remit, and that the care taken to give students a meaningful philosophical experience compares well to what is practiced by the other departments with 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 assessments were creative, and also appropriate to the aims of philosophical study with students coming from an 'applied' background. From what I have seen of student performance, they reflect a good standard of teaching.

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 range of performance of students was fine. Looking at the assessments that were set, these seemed appropriate, and I am satisfied that students are given the opportunity to show what they have learned.

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

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 am not aware of significant enhancements this 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 modules have clearly been designed and taught by people who have an active research interest in the topics.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

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

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 am satisfied that I have been able to assess the quality of the programmes adequately. However, I suggested at the meeting that detailed attention to all of the modules is not possible, and that a rolling programme of evaluation of individual modules might be a helpful innovation in the external examiner's role. In addition, external examiners can also play a more advisory role, where the areas on which advice is sought can legitimately be prompted by the department. For instance, if there are particular issues that the IDEA staff are confronting on which they would like the external examiner's opinion, this could be formulated and sent to me before the exam board.

- 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, I had access to the VLE, and was also sent programme specifications in the run-up to the exam board.

- 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?**

n/a

- 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 was given access to the VLE, from which I could see all the student work that had been submitted there.

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

Yes

- 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 was happy with the way the Board of Examiners meeting was run. As with last year, I was able to ask any questions that occurred to me, and we engaged in constructive debate on some issues – though I should make it clear that this discussion did not raise issues that were deeply problematic.

- 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

From:
Sent: 25 July 2016 10:22
To:
Subject: FW: IDEA External Examiner reports: intercalating BA
Importance: High

From:
Sent: 22 July 2016 15:56
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: IDEA External Examiner reports: intercalating BA
Importance: High

Dear

I am writing to thank you very much indeed for your careful and thoughtful work as external examiner for our BA and MA programmes.

Specifically, I am writing to thank you for your report on our intercalating BA in Biomedical and Healthcare Ethics. We were very pleased to see your satisfaction with the programmes and in particular with the quality both of the teaching and of the student work produced on the programme.

We note your points about the review of individual modules and the possibility of our writing to you in advance about any specific issues we wish to flag up for you. Obviously we understand these to be made in the context of your general satisfaction with the programme.

So I think we can take them together and note that you have indicated that where we have specific points to flag up about a module we should flag them up in advance.

Otherwise I am grateful for your extremely positive report and I don't think there is any other detail to address.

Once again I thank you very much for all you work and attention to our efforts.

Best wishes,

Professor of Inter-Disciplinary Applied Ethics

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