

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	School of Health Care, Faculty of Medicine and Health
Subject(s):	Nursing
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Mental Health Programme
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc (Nursing)

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

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.*

Aims and learning outcomes appear commensurate with the level of award. Evidence of incremental progression in learning outcomes is demonstrated across the years. This is applicable to both the academic and professional award as the ILOs progress to reflect the need to prepare students for the transition to qualified nursing practitioner.

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. Learning Outcomes are mapped onto the NMC pre-registration standards and organised into the domains to demonstrate on a modular level where the required knowledge and skills for the profession are developed. The programme is comparable with similar institutions and appears to provide a high quality learning experience preparing students for contemporary mental health nursing practice.

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 are varied, achieving a balanced assessment strategy which encourages the students to draw on different academic and professional skills whilst also maintaining appropriate alignment to the intended module learning outcomes. All assessments encourage the students to apply their knowledge and understanding to mental health nursing practice, often requiring them to explore aspects of their own nursing care. They also frequently include an element of student choice, enabling individuals to focus on particular aspects of mental health care that are of interest to them. This reflects a student centred approach. The assessment strategy is responsive with MAB reports and communication from the module leads indicating how student feedback from previous years has been addressed.

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.*

With the exception of one module, the pass rate at first attempt has been good to excellent amongst the mental health field. This reflects favourably upon not only teaching quality but also assignment support and clarity of guidelines and processes. The team are to be commended in this area. Markers award the full range of marks and provide high quality, detailed and individualised feedback. For marks achieving below 70 all markers provide feedback and feedforward. However, I have highlighted in module reports that there is greater opportunity for all markers to provide students who achieve grades above 70 with some feedforward to aid these students to maximise their personal development and their award. Concurring with last year, the students in 2015-16 have presented an impressive level of referencing accuracy and use of the literature to support their discussion in assignments across the programme. The area that students achieving the lower end of the grades appeared to have struggled with this year is application to practice. This is perhaps one of the most complex yet important aspects of assessment in nursing. Markers comments have clearly indicated to these students how they are able to develop their work.

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

The practice assessment components of the course are in line with professional requirements. Credits are awarded for practice based assessment which recognises the work students undertake in mental health settings and the assessment load this carries.

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 inclusion of optional modules in this programme whilst not new this year is a great innovation in a nursing programme. The optional modules that I review provide mental health students with an interesting opportunity to develop holistic and transferable knowledge for their profession. The high marks in these modules in this year's cohort clearly represent student engagement and enjoyment of these elements of the curriculum.

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 quality of the students' work highlights that contemporary mental health theory and research is informing the curriculum and teaching on this programme. As previously outlined, students demonstrate a strong ability to engage with the evidence base in mental health practice in their assessments. For this course, students are required to complete a 10,000-word literature review based dissertation, this requires engagement with contemporary healthcare research. Within this student are able to demonstrate knowledge of different research techniques and approaches. However, the structure of the dissertation and level of emphasis on methodological rather than conceptual analysis appears unusual, particularly in the field of mental health. A dissertation that is a full literature review which mirrors the style of an academic paper may also provide academically able students with publication opportunities.

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.

In the past academic year, I received a thorough induction. I have been able to use the detailed materials and external examiners handbook for reference when required during this academic year.

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 VLE ensures that the module documentation is fully accessible to me. The marking criteria is included in every module handbook which I have been able to view.

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 have not been provided with draft assessment guidelines this year. However, I have been contacted by module leads and provided with a summary of any developments that have been undertaken in their modules. I also reviewed planned amendments to the placement sequencing submitted as part of programme minor modifications.

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?

Yes. Results sheets identified samples for me to review which were across markers and grade boundaries. However, all students work was available on the VLE so I was able to compare for example submissions awarded the same mark, should I wish to clarify.

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

Mental Health students chose a range of subjects for their dissertation which reflected wide interests. This included some innovative and original ideas. As indicated in question 7 I do feel the structure of the dissertation facilitates detailed knowledge of research methodology but may limit the depth of students' examination of the empirical and theoretical foundations of mental health nursing, compared to for example a systematic or extended literature review. However, I do acknowledge that the dissertation module is an interprofessional module and therefore the structure may be influenced by other factors,

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 exam board is taking place on Tuesday 20th September. I will be attending this, though the date is after the submission of this report. I was informed of the date early in the academic year which was most helpful. Given that there have been a number of changes to the mental health academic team over the past 12 months, including the previous programme lead retiring, the transition has been smooth and I have been satisfied with the arrangements and support I have been offered.

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

During the induction I was made aware of the appropriate procedures for consideration of extenuating circumstances

Other comments

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

The education student services officers, in particular <<>> and <<>> have been extremely helpful, polite and prompt in their communication with me. This has been most valuable to enable me to satisfactorily undertake the External Examiners role.

School of Healthcare

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Direct line: 0113

E-mail:
headofschool@healthcare.leeds.ac.uk

13 February 2017

Dear

Re: **External Examiner's Report – 2015/2016 – BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health)**

I should like, on behalf of the programme team, to thank you for your annual report for the 2015/2016 session and for your continued involvement with the BSc (Hons) Nursing programme (Mental Health).

The team is very appreciative of your constructive and helpful support, which has always been offered promptly and has greatly aided our approach to assessment and curriculum development. Your feedback has been thoughtful and welcomed by the mental health programme team. Your report highlights the team's commitment to student learning and development. It is heartening to note that the creativity and engagement with student learning has been acknowledged.

The team has also noted your feedback about strengthening the range of feedback comments for higher-achieving students in order to help further develop and consolidate their knowledge and practice skills and this will be attended to with future modules. Your observation on the dissertation module has been noted and will be considered when we redesign the curriculum in the future; the current structure is, as you noted, been influenced by a number of factors given its inter-disciplinary focus.

The team looks forward to continuing the collaborative working partnership with you over the coming academic year.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely,

Head of School of Healthcare



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