

**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 Healthcare
Subject(s):	Midwifery
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Midwifery
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc (Hons)

**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*

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**

- 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.*

All learning outcomes are appropriate for the level of the programme and the professional requirements of the course

**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.*

The aims and ILOs meet the requirements for the professional award and are commensurate with national benchmark statements. They are similar to other professional programmes 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.*

All assessment tasks are clearly designed to demonstrate student's achievement of the learning outcomes. Assignments are set at an appropriate level and test a range of both academic and clinical skills.

**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 assessment designs enabled students to clearly demonstrate their ability to meet the learning outcomes for the modules reviewed. The majority of work reviewed during this academic year was of a good standard with the most students clearly meeting the module requirements. Weaker students either failed to address the academic task, often due to insufficient reading and research around the topic, or did not adequately address academic convention or had a poor grasp of academic writing skills. Student performance equates with that seen in my own institution and elsewhere.

Following discussion with a group of second year students they were satisfied with the guidance they receive in relation to assignments and exams. They also described good academic supervision when completing assignments and on the whole they felt that they received detailed feedback from the markers. However they felt that sometimes this feedback was more descriptive and would like to receive two or three key points which would help them to improve their work in future assessments.

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

I have had some opportunity to review the clinical portfolios completed by sign off mentor midwives and they appear to provide mentors with the appropriate guidance to formulate judgements of student performance against the assessment criteria.

I have not have an opportunity to visit clinical areas during this academic year but spoke to a group of students in relation to their clinical experience. Overall they are happy with their mentorship in placement and all reported that they achieved the required 40% of time with their named mentor. A large proportion of students identified that they had a second mentor which they felt helped with consistency of support and assessment. They described good support and engagement from the lecturing staff in placement and at the tripartite meetings. Clinical assessment was largely positively evaluated with students happy that they receive a grade for this aspect of the module. Some issues were raised about mentor and students understanding of the grading process but most students seemed assured of the process.

**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.*

N/A

**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.*

Research and the evidence base for practice clearly resonates within the curriculum and students demonstrate an ability to utilise research and evidence in all their assessed tasks.

**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.*

The VLE provides excellent access to module resources and to the assignments for moderation. The teaching team are proactive in sending me information they feel I require and I am assured that if I required any further information it would be forthcoming.

**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 have full access to all documentation required.

**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?**

Exams, including oral exams have been sent to me for my comments. If I make suggestions the team take these on board. Exams including oral exams use a range of questions and scenarios appropriate to the professional programme and test the appropriate learning outcomes and professional competencies.

**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 assignments are made available via the VLE and grademark and I can moderate across the range of grades as appropriate. I always receive a good range of exam papers to moderate and the process for sending and return of these via DHL works well.

Administrative processes are excellent, I get advanced notice of work being sent and any issues are addressed in a timely manner.

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

Students choose a wide range of topics for dissertation all of which have clear clinical relevance to their practise. The quality of dissertations was generally good with some students addressing the systematic nature of literature reviewing very successfully and producing excellent reviews. Those students achieving lower marks did not demonstrate the same understanding of the review process and were less systematic in their approach to the assessment task. This assessment is very appropriate and provides students with skills relevant to their professional development. All marking and internal moderation processes are robust.

**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 was well organised and thorough in its decision making with a clear transparent approach to progress issues. All arrangements were satisfactory.

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

I had no direct input into these processes but am aware of a number of students who had mitigation considered.

**Other comments**

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

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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8 February 2017

Dear

Re: **External Examiner's Report –2015/2016 - BSc (Hons) Midwifery**

Thank you for your external examiner's report and your positive feedback about the School's processes and procedures, responsiveness to your reports and suggestions and administrative support to enable you to fulfil your role.

It is reassuring that you judge the standard and quality of assessment and feedback in the programme to be commensurate with other institutions and to meet professional standards. It is interesting to note that when you met with the students on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016 they indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of their feedback and academic supervision. This is an area that has reduced scores in our NSS and Undergraduate Experience Survey reflecting the situation locally and nationally. The team has included an action point in the Programme Review plan to strengthen the consistency of feedback and staff will in future highlight three things the students have done well and three suggestions for improvements. The team is evaluating the assessment guidelines and will make sure students are fully aware of the guidelines used for academic supervision.

As you are aware reliability and meeting the 40% of time with sign-off mentors can be a challenge in the clinical environment and the team works hard though liaison lecture involvement and mentor updates to address these issues and will continue to do so. First year students are inducted into the requirements and content of the three practice documents and each student is visited with their mentor three times across the first year. The CAD 1 year documents have been updated to reflect the change to the NMC Code and the new BFI standards. The continuity of carer initiative has been integrated to enable first and third year students in their community placement to understand the journey women experience as they negotiate childbirth. It is hoped that this experience and their reflection will help them develop as practitioners able to meet the challenges of 'Better Births'.

I understand that 2016-17 is your final year in the role as external examiner to the programme and would like to thank you for your engagement with the midwifery team and helpful support.

Yours sincerely,