

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:	Education
Subject(s):	<i>Childhood studies</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	EDUC 5861 M Theorizing Children and Youth EDUC 5862M Research with Children and Young People EDUC 5863M On-screen, Off-screen: Children's Creativity and Culture EDUC 5865M Children, Young People: Citizenship, Participation and Social Justice EDUC 5001M Critical Study
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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

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?

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.*

- Aims and Learning Objectives are clearly set out at course and module level in the documentation. They are clearly translated in terms of the curriculum, the organisation of the course into relevant modules and in terms of stated teaching activities and assessment.

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.*

There are no laid down national standards within the field of Childhood Studies but in my experience as an external examiner and someone who has run a similar course at a Russell Group university, I concur that the aims and learning outcomes are what you would expect at Masters level at a Russell Group University.

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 diverse in that for each of the 5 modules I examined there are a different mode of assessment. These forms of assessment were fit for purpose in terms of the aims and content of each module. The assessment allows students to develop a deeper understanding of theoretical debates and links between research and policy. The dissertation and the methods module gives students a firm grasp of research processes and affords them the opportunity to develop their research skills. Having examined various samples of students' work I am very satisfied with the marking across all modules.

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.*

- Yes, students on the whole are comparable to other similar degrees at other universities.
- This year there was a much larger cohort of 20 students. The marks for the modules ranged from 40% through to 90%. For the dissertations the range was 58-75. At the bottom end of marking scale there were a number of flaws, including failure to proof read, lack of structure, insufficient analytic rigour and lack of understanding of the material. At the top end there was excellent engagement with the conceptual material and well structured, written and presented pieces of work. The 90% was a standout piece of work and I agree with the markers that the student should seriously consider undertaking doctoral 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

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.

In discussion with the students the personal tutorial system was highly commended. This was introduced from the beginning of the year 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.

This course is taught by leaders in the field of Childhood Studies. The curriculum and reading are shaped by their research interests and the work of others in the field. Students are also prepared for undertaking research through the module Research with Children and Young People. Here there is a mixture of seminars workshops and tutorials which provide a very thorough grounding the theory and practice of research. From the discussion I have had with students on this course, students are encouraged to analysis data and think through the opportunities and challenges of putting together a piece of research. This is crystallised through the assessment for the module, a 6000word research proposal. Students in the second semester are expected to develop their research skills further through the critical study.

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.

This was fine

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

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, I was sent copies of essay questions. Students are able to choose from lists of questions but in conjunction with their tutor can come up with their open essay questions.

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, there was a sufficient sample of work sent to me undertaken by the students for all 5 modules. I was impressed with the marking. All work was marked by at least two tutors. In some cases where the work had failed it had been marked by 3 tutors. The cover sheets provided a clear summary of their performance and there was encouraging commentary on improvements that could be made. I also liked the way that the tutors engaged with the material in the students' text.

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

Yes, assess was very good here.

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?

yes

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

As far as I know

Other comments

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

This continues to be an excellent, intellectually interesting and challenging course which engages with state of the art research.

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

13 January 2017

Dear

Thank for sending your External Examiner's Report for the MA Childhood Studies (MACS) course during 2015- 16. I wish to thank you for the highly positive and supportive comments on the MACS. In particular, I note that you find the Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes appropriate to a Russell Group University Master's level; that there is a clear translation of these into the curriculum, course organisation including module offers, teaching activities, the appropriateness and diversity of modes of assessment; the international reputation and excellence of the teaching team and how their research influences the delivery of the curriculum. In particular, your report underlined the robustness and accuracy of marking (given that this year module marks ranged from 40% through to 90%), feedback and assessment. I am pleased that you find the School provides sufficient support, arrangements and documentation for you to carry out your work as External Examiner.

On behalf of the MA Childhood Studies team and the School of Education I wish to express our great appreciation of your work and continuous support of the programme during the past academic year. We are very much looking forward to be working with you in the academic year 2016/17.

Yours sincerely

Head of School of Education