

# The University of Leeds

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QA Team received 21/06/2017

### Part A: General Information

#### Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Cert HE Child and Family Studies. Foundation Degree Child and Family Studies. BA Child and Family Studies. BA Early Childhood Studies. Modules: LLLC1421, LLLC1369, LLLC1370, LLLC1080, LLLC1411, LLLC2251, LLLC2222, LLLC2209, LLLC2267, LLLC2060, LLLC2211, LLLC3961, LLLC3958, LLLC3956, LLLC3955, LLLC3801, LLLC3957.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Cert HE, Foundation Degree, BA

### Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

#### Points of innovation and/or good practice

*Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.*

The Lifelong Learning Centre Cert HE, Foundation Degree and BA Top-up programmes in Child and Family Studies, and Childhood Studies, provide wide-ranging and engaging programmes of professional and academic development and learning. Modules provide a solid grounding in psychological and social studies as well as professional skills and development relevant to working with children, young people and families. There is a strong ethical dimension across the programmes which promote professional ethics and values in working with multi-agency, reflective, authoritative and enabling ways with service users and professionals. Students are encouraged to engage with a range of relevant theories, to consider cultural/social/service contexts, to critically engage with policy/practice debates and to develop reflective, analytical and professional skills to enhance their independent and multi-agency roles and responsibilities. There is clear progression in the knowledge and skills developed through the undergraduate programmes. Modules have clear learning outcomes, innovatively specified in knowledge and skills terms. Pedagogic approaches are varied (employing a range of learning strategies and types of assignments) which is particularly well suited to the student cohort. Assignments also include innovative features of professional orientated learning with activities such as reflections on practice journals and case study analysis which encourage students to apply their academic learning to practice roles, contexts and problem solving. Assignments have clear learning outcomes and feedback is clearly provided related to the learning aims, strengths and limitations of students' work, and areas for future improvement.

It was particularly good to see dissertations of a high standard based on comprehensive, well designed and evidenced empirical research. Students commented on the benefits of the support they received via dissertation supervision and support. It was also good to see in a couple of modules consideration of children's inclusion, voices and perspectives.

#### Enhancements made from the previous year

*Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.*

N/A

### 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.

### For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

### For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y / N
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y / N
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y / N
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

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

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

The programme structure for the whole BA programme (and shorter programmes) is effective with broader introductory theoretical, childhood and policy modules forming the basis for learning in the first year followed by more in-depth modules in these areas in the subsequent years and additional more specialist modules such as in multi-agency working, safeguarding children, mental health issues, management of self and others, and leadership and management. The learning aims for the programmes and modules are clear and appropriate – set out in terms of knowledge and skills aims and outcomes.

Two work-based projects (in the 2-3yrs, BA) enable students to apply the range of theories, research and policy/practice analysis they are exploring to specific work-based contexts, issues and challenges. This aids their professional development and integration of their skills, knowledge and values-based learning.

The dissertation provides an excellent way for final year BA students to develop and demonstrate their empirical research skills and knowledge as well as undertake a significant independent piece of work in an area of child and family studies, policy and practice of interest to them.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)

Via module learning and assessment feedback students are encouraged to consult and analyse research studies, data and findings to develop an informed and analytical approach to working with children and families.

Specific assignments directly aim to develop and assess students' understanding of, use of and application of research and research methodologies/methods (e.g. reviewing a research article; analysing a specific issue/social change or social policy; doing an empirical based dissertation).

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
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*Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:*

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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*Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:*

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
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*Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:*

### Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
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*Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: 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.*

As stated above the assessment methods were appropriate and engaging – employing essay based assignments for more in-depth analytical assessments as well as reflective journals to develop reflective practice skills; case study analysis to develop analytical skills and apply conceptual/theoretical thinking; research article reviews to develop critical thinking and writing skills; groupwork and presentation based assignments to develop team work skills and presentation/analysis skills; work-place projects to examine key issues in practice and service contexts; research proposal and ethics application assignments; and multiple choice/structured tests.

Marking was appropriate and feedback was clear and related well to learning aims and outcomes. The majority of modules provided transparent feedback on the allocation of marks for specific aspects of the assignment and provided clear and specific 'overall feedback and advice on what to improve in the future'.

The learning materials and communication on the VLE system indicated students had access to comprehensive learning resources for the module, reading lists and reference/additional resources. Module organisation was also explained well in the module handbooks and in additional information available on the VLE. Assessment information and guidance was provided.

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
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19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
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*Please comment on 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 standard range for assignments and classifications were in line with similar child and family studies undergraduate and foundation level programmes (of which there aren't too many in the UK). Over the three years of the programme there is good evidence of student improvement overall especially in terms of developing conceptual and theoretical knowledge; academic skills and reflective, critical practice skills. An increasing number of students gained higher marks in yr 2 and 3 for the BA programme. This is to be

commended given the challenges students with professional responsibilities face in engaging with and completing HE programmes.

*Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:*

The Programme Managers informed me two situations of module assessment reviews following marking moderation procedures. The action taken to review and amend marks reflected effective moderation processes and actions.

### The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	N/A
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	N/A
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y

*Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:*

### Other comments

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

**Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report****Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Responder:

Position\*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Programme Manager, Child and Family Studies

*Lifelong Learning Centre*

*\*If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.*

**Completing the School response**

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at [gat@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:gat@leeds.ac.uk). External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

**Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice**

We welcome the detailed and thoughtful comments provided by the external examiner. It is clear from the report that [redacted] has a sound understanding regarding the aims and objectives of the Child and Family Studies programme. In part, this is attributable to the fact that [redacted] is involved in a similar program at [redacted] and has been an external examiner for similar degree programmes in other institutions. [redacted] also writes on relevant topics regarding the discipline of Child and Family Studies so we really value [redacted] contribution to the programme.

[redacted] was complimentary about pedagogy and the range of assessment strategies on the programme including foci on reflective practice and professional orientated learning. We were pleased to note the comments regarding high standard dissertation submissions which included empirical underpinnings and sound ethical principles including inclusion of marginalised voices.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

Being [redacted] first year in role [redacted] was unable to comment on enhancements, but I'm sure [redacted] will be able to do into the future. Child and Family Studies innovated a completely online marking, second marking, internal moderation and external moderation process allowing [redacted] to review student material remotely.

**Response to Matters for Urgent Attention**

*If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:*

Not applicable

**Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)**

*Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:*

We will discuss the appointment of a suitable mentor.

## Standards

### **Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)**

*Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:*

There seem to be no areas to specifically address regarding the application of standards, and statements in the report indicated clear learning objectives, assessment criteria and feedback.

We were pleased to receive the complimentary remarks about pedagogy and the range of assessment strategies on the programme including foci on reflective practice and professional orientated learning. We are also encouraged that high standard dissertation submissions were evident to the external examiner which included empirical underpinnings and sound ethical principles including inclusion of marginalised voices.

## Assessment and Feedback

### **Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)**

*Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:*

There are no areas to address. We are pleased that the external examiner felt that assessment and feedback was appropriate and in line with standards on similar courses elsewhere.

## The Progression and Awards Process

### **Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)**

*Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:*

was complimentary regarding student learning gain and progression given the widening participation demographic of our student intake.

In summary, with no significant areas to address, the Child and Family Studies programme hopes to continue working with as gains a greater understanding of the programme over time.

## Other comments

### **Response to items included in the 'Other Comments' section of the report**

16 October 2017

Dear

**External Examiner's Report for 2016-17**

I am writing to thank you for your work over the last year as External Examiner for our Foundation Degree and honours degree in Child and Family Studies. I know that and team are very appreciative of your observations on our work from an external perspective. It is particularly encouraging to have your affirmation, as a new external examiner, of the overall quality of this provision.

As you may have noticed there are sections of the External Examiner's form which are designed to provide you with a structured response to your report from our programme team. Please find this completed form enclosed so that you can see the thoughts and plans that arise from our consideration of your comments.

With all good wishes,