

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Biological Sciences
Subject(s):	<i>Pharmacology</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BMSC3101 Inherited Disorders BMSC3143 Advanced Topics in Pharmacology I BMSC3149 Drug Development: pre-clinical to practice BMSC3302 Medical Pharmacology BMSC1210 Introduction to Pharmacology BMSC2210 Chemotherapy BMSC2214 Introduction to toxicology BMSC2223 Neuropharmacology BMSC2224 Principles of Drug Discovery BMSC3233 Advanced Topics in Pharmacology II BMSC2117 Cardio-respiratory Pharmacology BMSC1190 Experimental Skills BMSC2118 Neurobiology BMSC3140 Advanced Scientific Skills
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

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.

Provision of materials for us to examine was very well organised and presented.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

I have nothing to add here, the process was excellent as usual and all materials were provided. Borderline cases were highlighted and all the relevant information given to examiners on the day. Project annotation and annotations in general marking were better this year than last (i.e. there was more of it) and this is to be commended.

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

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	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 is well structured, balanced across specialist areas and uses a good range of assessment approaches without over-burdening the students with assessment.

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)

Yes, it is clear that staff with specific research interests have a strong input of curriculum design e.g. with modules and papers on drug design using epilepsy as an example, and exploring animal research ethics and practice.

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
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The aims and ILOs were of the high standard that I would expect from most UK institutions offering first degrees in Pharmacology and Biomedical Sciences. The breadth of the material covered, as well as the level of detail, was excellent, and the broad range of pharmacology and neuroscience-based research at Leeds meant that the course offered a rich and diverse array of subject material with which to engage the student. In general, assessment across the scripts I reviewed was of the short answer or essay format, with some questions based upon calculations or problem solving. All of the methods of assessment were appropriate to the subject material and were in line with assessment methods at my own and other institutions of which I have knowledge. Marking was generally excellent, with supplementary reading and significant errors well annotated by markers and often with a brief summary of the value for an answer. The level of annotation this year was again very good indeed and this made the task of reviewing much easier and gave real insight into the marking process. Annotation of projects was useful and informative and project marking was both appropriate and consistent between first and second markers.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
<p><i>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:</i></p> <p>Students were clearly able to demonstrate achievement, with the better students scoring well across questions/modules and several outstanding individual performances in the final year. The course clearly allows for differentiation between the students in terms of ability. The Advanced Pharmacology modules, in particular, were useful in showing student engagement with topics they enjoyed, highlighting strong links to research and showing good evidence of students having read the literature in depth. In general, the students appeared to perform as well as those on similar courses on which I have taught and/or examined. I was unable to speak to students in March as normal this year, however, colleagues who spoke to Pharmacology students reported and excellent impression amongst students of the pharmacology teaching staff are high regard for their abilities.</p> <p>Students again showed evidence of having read around the subject with quotations and citations from journal articles used to underpin statements in essay questions. For obvious reasons, this was most apparent in the Advanced Topics modules; however, it was evident elsewhere on occasion too. Again this year I had a small number of borderline cases to review and this process confirmed that academic staff were able to weigh and justify borderline cases well, and were very fair to the students who had suffered mitigating circumstances.</p> <p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p> <p>This is my last year as external examiner on the Leeds Pharmacology degree and I would like to say that I have been very impressed indeed with the standard of teaching and assessment on the various modules I have been asked to cover. There is real evidence of commitment both to the students but also to rigorous and fair assessment and staff should be proud of their high standards in this regard.</p>		

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?	Y
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?	Y
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p>		

Other comments

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

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Programme Leader
Faculty / School of:	Biomedical Sciences
Address for communication:	University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

*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 qat@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

No specific issues were raised requiring comment.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

No specific issues were raised requiring comment.

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:

There were no issues raised that require urgent attention.

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:

Q1-3 were not answered – I assume at this stage the answers should be “Y” (based upon comment in **Response to Enhancements made from the previous year** box).

No specific issues were raised requiring comment.

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:

We are pleased to have the structure, design, aims and LOs of the programme affirmed by the External Examiner, and that the influence of research is clearly displayed in the curriculum.

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:

The appropriateness of the assessment methods and their correlation to the ILOs were affirmed. The level of marking and feedback was commended. The introduction of annotations on the dissertation scripts, as suggested in the previous year by the External Examiner of an aligned programme, was welcomed.

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:

No specific issues were raised requiring comment.

Other comments

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

We are delighted to see that _____ has observed the programme improving during _____ time as External Examiner. It is pleasing to hear that the learning, teaching and administrative processes have been positively commented upon. We would like to thank _____ for _____ enthusiastic and conscientious approach to acting as our External Examiner during the past 4 years.