

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17 QAT Received 13/03/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Education, Faculty of Education social sciences and Law
Subject(s):	<i>Deaf education</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA Deaf Education (Teacher of the Deaf)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA

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.
In the professionals skills portfolio the students are asked to reflect back on their first assignment and to write how they improved in their following assignments. **This is a great example of good practice on how to encourage students to become reflective practitioners and critical thinkers.**

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
This was my first year of appointment as external examiner but I am aware that the programme lead is constantly reviewing the content and structure of the programme based on my and students' feedback.

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
No urgent action is required.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y

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 an 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

N/A

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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The programme is well structured and designed to meet the aims and learning outcomes appropriately and effectively.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>The fact that both lecturers are research active and producing good quality research really enhances the teaching and learning on the programme. My intention this year is to discuss in more detail how recent and current research projects in which the programme lead has been and is recently involved can influence the curriculum design of the programme.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p> <p>N/A</p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p> <p>N/A</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p> <p>The programme has been accredited by NCTL to meet the competencies required for the Mandatory Qualification for teachers of hearing impaired children. The University of Leeds programme meets these competencies and the tutor team are also very proactive in checking the updating of these national competencies. The programme lead has recently taken the initiative in reviewing the mandatory qualification in collaboration with the other universities that currently offer the qualification for teachers of the deaf.</p>		

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 assessment methods are appropriate for the learning outcomes. The assignment titles are constantly reviewed by the programme lead. I am always informed about the changes and able to comment on the suitability of assignment titles. I have noticed (specifically in relation to the teaching and learning module) that there were some inconsistencies in comments between markers regarding the quantity and quality of the comments. I discussed this with the programme lead during my last visit for the exam board and the programme lead reassured me that she would take action to address this issue. In addition, I noticed that in some places incorrect referring used by students was not always picked up by the marker in the feedback given.</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>The academic standards are high and the students' performance is highly comparable to the performance of students in relation to students at _____ (of which I have the closest knowledge). Most of the students of the current cohort at the University of Leeds achieve high marks although there are students (specifically those whose English is not their first language i.e. BSL users) whose performance is consistently low. I questioned the support that these students receive and I was reassured by the programme lead that these students are supported in a number of different ways (e.g. tutorials, writing skills support etc.).</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>The number of students who requested extensions for dissertations last year was high. Only 4 out of 15 students submitted their dissertation. Although I am aware of the difficulties that the students of this programme face (as I am leading an equivalent programme) and I am certain that there were appropriate reasons for granting extensions, I am just raising the fact the number of submissions was low.</p>		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's 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
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>		

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*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School	
<i>Education</i>	
School of Education University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT	

*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

The Professional Skills Portfolio is a module designed to link students theoretical knowledge with their practical school based skills. This links closely to the competencies required by the Mandatory Qualification of Teacher of the Deaf. Many students return to studying after some time and we have found it extremely valuable to encourage students to reflect on their assignment feedback. This will be further enhanced in the next academic year as copies of this document will be sent to the students work based mentor to encourage further discussion within their work environment.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

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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:

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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:

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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:

As a programme team and I recognise the importance of research informed practice. We work closely with a range of practitioners to support our research and ensure that it is grounded in current classroom experiences. Consequently the research feeds into the programme and the programme supports the research. In addition collaboration with national bodies such as the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf, the National Sensory Impairment Partnership and the National Deaf Children's Society enhance both areas of work. These bodies are currently partners within our research. It will be extremely valuable to review this process with in the coming academic year.

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 MQ competencies will be subject to a national review within the next 18 months and as a result we will be required to renew our application for the mandate to award the Teacher of the Deaf Qualification. The DfE will be reviewing the award and we are leading a review of the current documentation with other universities.

In response to _____'s comments regarding consistency of feedback during _____ visit in June 2017 this was raised at the markers' meeting in preparation for marking the subsequent assignment. A format was agreed by the team, in line with recommendations of the School of Education Assessment Group. Additional attention was given to referencing as part of the feedback.

Teachers appointed to the role of Teacher of the Deaf are required to obtain the mandatory award within three years of their appointment and the majority of the students are studying and working fulltime. This presents some students with a range of challenges particularly if they have specific learning needs, and is something that we keep under continuous review. We have a number of deaf students whose first language is BSL as well as a number of students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia. Some of these students engage well with the demands of the course and are successful academically. For others the nature of the reading and academic writing proves more challenging. We offer a range of different support to all students who experience challenges including additional writing workshops for each module and individual tutorial support. The later may be face to face, via skype or over the phone. Care is taken to ensure that the students communication needs are met fully though the use of BSL interpreters, note takers and assistive technologies. _____ was reassured that we had suitable support in place.

Currently the MA Deaf Education Programme with Teacher of the Deaf award requires the students to complete 210 credits. This is a heavy workload particularly as the majority are working full time whilst studying. In addition it is clear that the students are also experiencing increased pressures and expectations from school. This has led to an increase in reported stress levels by the students, feedback requesting: less reading requirements for modules; expressions of frustrations when resources are not instantly available but require time to locate within the library and increased guidance for the assignments. There has also been an increase in requests for extensions for all assignments including the dissertation. Consequently a review has been undertaken of the MQ competencies and the modular assessments and as a result two modules have been replaced leading to an overall reduction in credits to 195. The type of assessments have also been updated.

In previous years' approximately half of the students opted for the PG Dip fall back award choosing not to undertake the dissertation. Increasingly students are keen to complete the dissertation, despite the increase in workplace pressure, in part in response to the development of the on line material to support research skills. Consequently there are a higher number of students extending their studies into the writing up period, the 3rd year. It is anticipated that the overall changes to the programmes will support students to complete their dissertation within the two years.

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:

Other comments

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