

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>Education</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Masters in Learning and Teaching; MA in Teaching
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MA, PG Dip, PG Cert

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:

Institution:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

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 Academic Quality and Standards**
Academic Quality and Standards Team
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

N/A

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

The programme has continued to maintain consistency of basic core MA standards and levels of academic engagement over a period of time where the sector has been subjected to change and turbulence. Not least in the context from which students in schools are coming to the programme from. Consistency has also been maintained over a period where tutors and programme leaders have changed. Teaching and learning has stayed focused upon practice with good links between this and theoretical perspectives. There may be a need to begin to review the range of theoretical perspectives to reflect current trends and changes in thinking. In particular, a move away from such things as learning styles and VAKS and towards the more recent interest in memory and cognition.

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 outcomes are appropriate to the level of the award.

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.*

Aims and outcomes are comparable in terms of indicative content, scope and learning processes for similar Masters programmes in Education, specifically for those aimed mainly at practitioners.

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.*

Assessment methods are appropriate to the LOs and there is some variety in the approaches to assessment.

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 standard of work on these postgraduate programmes is comparable with similar level work at other universities where I am external examiner. Stronger work shows greater critical engagement and a more robust level of challenge when engaging with literature, research and ideas. Weaker work tends to be more descriptive and follows an uncritical 'what works' approach.

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

N/A

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.

There remains some variation in the level of engagement with methodology from students and the distinction between methodology and method is not always evident. As noted in the section for final reports, some of the dissertations could benefit from looking at a wider range of theoretical perspectives and some more current trends. Whilst there was some discussion of the merits or otherwise of VAKS and learning styles in one dissertation, it was rather superficial given the diminished status of these ideas.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. 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

9. 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.*

Access to essential documentation has been good.

10. 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.*

All documentation was received.

11. 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?

N/A

12. 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. Annotations on scripts were generally of a good quality. There was not always evidence of a deep engagement in feedback with the substantive content of some of the critical studies assessments.

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

Choice of subjects was appropriate.

14. 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?

Everything was satisfactory

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

I assume so. This didn't come up.

Other comments

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

I was not able to attend the board this year and so these comments are based on a review of the scripts alone.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School	
<i>Education</i>	
Hillary Place 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

It was pleasing to see that, despite the unfortunate loss of the previous programme leader and changes in students' contexts, that good standards of teaching and learning have been maintained. We do try to forge a strong link between students' practice in the classroom and theory, so that students can use what they learn to develop their own ideas and enhance their practice in the classroom, and it is good to see that this is evident.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**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:

n/a

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:

It is good to see that our programme continues to maintain the M-level quality for that of other similar programmes. Although we do mention learning styles and VAK learning there is no promotion of these ideas, indeed our teaching reflects the current move away from these, however, it is useful to be reminded that we need to review the evidence for this and think about new approaches regarding memory and cognition.

We appreciate the comments about the difference between methodology and research design, particularly in dissertations and have been working on this again this year to continue to improve students' engagement with and understanding of research methodology. We invite students to come back for three half days of teaching on research and an introduction to the online research module with which we ask students to audit. I will continue to work hard in developing these areas in the teaching and learning that surrounds the dissertation.

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:

I am pleased that access to documentation and arrangements and administrative issues have been good. We are very lucky to be supported extremely well by our Student Education Support Officer, .
I have taken note that the substantive content of the critical studies may not have been engaged with as fully as it could have been. I think in part this may be due to our assessment criteria and these are changing this year to make content knowledge much more central to the marks awarded.

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:

n/a

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:

n/a

Other comments

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

none