

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Education
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>History and Geography</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	PGCE

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

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Whilst the PGCE course is in its last year the general high standards have been maintained. On the whole students were positive. The greatest praise from the students was reserved for their tutors (History and Geography) and for their mentors in schools. There was a degree of variability in mentoring – not uncommon on courses like this – but overall the students felt very well supported in their subject areas. The praise for the more generic elements of the course were less fulsome. Again, this is not uncharacteristic of such courses but maybe the university might have considered the overlap that appears to be the case with the provision provided by school clusters and the university programme. .

Enhancements made from the previous year

It has been two years since my last period on external examining for the course. Since this period there was more consistency between the school placements and the quality of the mentoring observed.

Matters for Urgent Attention

As the course is now closing it is not necessary for me to comment here apart from the fact that there is need to think about the provision of subject specific sessions (University based) in the new training arrangements with Red Kite. It would be a regrettable omission if such sessions were not included/developed and if students were not able to come together to develop subject specific ways of working and thinking. A subject cohort identification has been a real strength of the current course it would be a shame to lose this characteristic of the work undertaken by the University of Leeds.

The announcement of the closure of the course to partnership schools was also commented on by colleagues in schools and maybe **the university could acknowledge and celebrate the excellent work that has gone on in schools.** At a wider/higher university level than the School of Education there is also a need to recognise that for some schools this departure from ITE work by the University leaves a significant hole especially at a time of crisis in relation to teacher recruitment and retention and also in terms of professional development work in schools – **the development of good mentoring and support for early career teachers being a significant issue here.**

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
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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 a External Examiner Mentor?	Y

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 course has continued to grow and develop during a period of significant challenge. It is to the great credit of the tutors involved in the course that both schools and also students were absolutely fulsome in their praise for the subject specific elements of the course. I have been delighted to see some of the recommendations for particular sessions being implemented and appraised. A real strength that I have observed is the highly professional and productive relationships that have been developed with school based colleagues. There is a very high degree of professional respect between school and university colleagues and this is highly valued and commented on by the students.

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

The History and Geography PGCE courses are very well structured and commensurate with other courses of this nature. All of the students that I saw teach are and will be a continuing credit to the profession. They have been well 'trained/educated' and the tutors and mentors should receive high levels of recognition for the fantastic job they have done.

The written assignments that I have looked at demonstrated a range of levels. **All assignments have been well marked with good formative feedback and summative grades are fully justified.** Students valued the feedback and the conversations with tutors that followed the written feedback. I agreed with the grades awarded although I think there were a couple of assignments at the top end of the spectrum that were awarded marks on the generous side and conversely there were a couple of assignments awarded lower end of grades that I felt could have been rewarded a little higher. There are always elements of academic judgement here and none of these assignments were awarded a grade that I was uncomfortable with. I had an opportunity to discuss these assignments with the tutors and the debate was fruitful and informative.

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)

Both tutors are informed by professional/scholarship reading and this has clearly fed through into teaching sessions. Further reference to research is apparent in teaching sessions and I was impressed by the quality of the reading undertaken by students in their assignments and such high levels of engagement were further demonstrated in my conversations with the students. The nature of tutor appointments means that opportunities for doing further research are limited but it would be good for future ITE staff to develop these perspectives to their work.

The students were engaged in small-scale action-based research which in general was well handled. Here I would have advised the shaping of tighter research questions and being slightly less ambitious in the scope of the investigations. Ethical issues had been dealt with very well although there were a couple of examples where anonymity needed to be further addressed (it was highlighted by the marking tutors).

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i>		
<p>The students are required to meet the Standards for the award of Qualified teacher Status set out by the DfE. All of the students observed in their teaching placements demonstrated that these standards had been met and in most cases exceeded.</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<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>The PGCE students are assessed through a number of inter-related ways. The practical elements of their work teaching in schools are assessed against national standards. The students that I had the pleasure of seeing on placement more than demonstrated their level of achievement in relation to these standards. Tutors and school based mentors did an excellent job in all of the support and strategies they employed to help these students develop and in most cases thrive.</p> <p>In respect of the Standards there is need for the students to collect evidence to show that they have met these Standards. This is achieved through constructing an e-portfolio. Whilst the students were not so critical of this as a method of demonstrating their levels of achievement, as they were during my previous tenure as external examiner, I am still of the opinion that this is more of a paper exercise and time spent on constructing the e-portfolio and dealing with a number of technical issues, might be better employed in more fruitful professional reflection. It is an aspect of the course that with closure will not, in my case, be lamented.</p> <p>The assignments that are set provide key opportunities for students to bring together their practical work alongside research and scholarship readings. It is also encouraging to see a high level of critical reflections and evolution of their teaching. .</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
<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>The standards are certainly comparable to the performance of students on other similar courses that I am familiar with.</p>		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		
<p>Please see my comments above. In addition I would add that the level of feedback in relation to lessons observed in schools is commendable and in most cases of a very high quality. Key strengths and targets are clearly articulated and possible actions are outlined. This observation pertains to both university tutors and school based mentors.</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?	N/A
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

My concluding comment is that the closure of the course is a sad occasion and it should not go un-reported that **the demise of higher education involvement in teacher "training" is, in my estimation, damaging to the teaching** profession and takes away from the university a significant area of impact that universities have in terms of their local area. It will be important for schools to think about how relationships with universities are forged anew and how the universities will help schools and their pupils – their future 'customers'.

I have really enjoyed my time as the external examiner for Leeds. I wish the tutors from the course every future success and I do hope that the School of Education at the University of Leeds will continue to thrive in this 'brave new world'.

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

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Secondary PGCE Programme Leader
Faculty / School of:	School of Education
Address for communication:	School of Education 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 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

I am very pleased to read your comment:

Whilst the PGCE course is in its last year the general high standards have been maintained. On the whole students were positive. The greatest praise from the students was reserved for their tutors (History and Geography) and for their mentors in schools.

(and under Q7: The course has continued to grow and develop during a period of significant challenge. It is to the great credit of the tutors involved in the course that both schools and also students were absolutely fulsome in their praise for the subject specific elements of the course. I have been delighted to see some of the recommendations for particular sessions being implemented and appraised. A real strength that I have observed is the highly professional and productive relationships that have been developed with school based colleagues. There is a very high degree of professional respect between school and university colleagues and this is highly valued and commented on by the students.)

Despite the challenges of knowing this would be the last year of the programme my colleagues continued to provide the high levels of support seen in previous years. Your comment will be much appreciated by them.

I note your comments about a degree of variability in mentoring and about the generic (EPS) aspect of the course. As you state, these are common issues for PGCE courses to deal with and we will sadly no longer be able to pursue development in these areas.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Thank for these comments.

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:

Your feedback and comments about our ongoing work with SCITT partners is noted and will help to inform our future development work in this area. We share the concerns voiced about our departure from QTS ITE.

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:

Thank you for these comments which I will pass on to my History and Geography colleagues.

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:

Thank you for these comments which I will pass on to my History and Geography colleagues. Thank you as well for noting that "All of the students observed in their teaching placements demonstrated that these standards had been met and in most cases exceeded."

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:

Your comments about the e-profile are noted. Despite some of the strengths of an e-portfolio system I have to admit that with the closure of our course I too will not lament its passing.

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

Thank you for your External Examiner report for the Secondary History and Geography PGCE programmes (2016-17). Your efforts in examining our programmes and the feedback you have provided during your service are much appreciated. I only wish the University planned to continue the PGCE programme so that we could act on the feedback we have received from our examiners. I could not agree more with comment that "the demise of higher education involvement in teacher 'training' is, in my estimation, damaging to the teaching profession and takes away from the university a significant area of impact that universities have in terms of their local area".

It is somewhat frustrating for me that we will be unable to act directly on your valuable feedback as our course is no longer running. However, your feedback will inform our practice as we develop our BA Education programme. Your work as External Examiner has been much valued and appreciated. Your supportive comments and informal feedback during school visits and the assessment boards has been thought-provoking and very helpful. Thank you for your support.