

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>PGCE Science and PGCE English</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	EDUC5500M EPS1, EDUC5150M EPS1 SD, EDUC5151 EPS2 SD, EDUC5501M EPS2, EDUC5155M SD Physics, EDUC5156M SD Chemistry, EDUC5157M SD Biology, EDUC5533M Biology, EDUC5534M Chemistry, EDUC5152M, EDUC342501
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	PGCE and QTS

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

Points of innovation and/or good practice

The support for students from university academics is clearly a real strength - particular where trainees had found placement to be a difficult experience and were struggling to meet the demands of QTS. The integration of school based training, academic assignments and the taught elements of the programme provides a coherent whole.

Enhancements made from the previous year

There were no significant developments or enhancements in evidence from the year prior to last, which was when the course had last run.

Matters for Urgent Attention

None

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	Y / N
3. / N	Were you provided with a 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? <i>In previous years, yes. Not so evident this year.</i>	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?	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

It has been an atypical period of appointment (spanning 4 years) given the situation of the PGCE programme over the past few years. Throughout I have been able to confidently agree the quality of the programme and the awards given to the students. I received excellent mentoring and support in my first year in which I was able to become familiar with the structure and aims of the course. I was also able to offer some thoughts and constructive feedback which I felt was taken seriously. In the second year, I was able to offer additional insight and, again, felt that this was accepted and given due consideration. There was then a year in which there were no students and the course did not run, bringing me to this final year of appointment and, indeed, regrettably, the final year of the course. This has been a time during which there were also significant changes in staffing. The course, has, perhaps, lost a little momentum over this period and progressive development and enhancement has not, perhaps understandably, appear to have been at the forefront. That does not mean that quality has significantly dropped but it is fair to say that my sense was that, overall, student satisfaction was lower this year than in previous years. Should the course be continuing there would be a number of aspects that I would be recommending would need to be addressed, notably around communication internally between staff, with external partners and with 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
<i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<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>		
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>		

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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>Assessment methods for both the academic award and against the Teachers' Standards for QTS are highly appropriate. Arrangements for marking of the modules and classification of awards was also appropriate. Overall students achieved well. The full range of marks was used in all modules and good but proportionate feedback offered. There evidence of second marking and moderation.</p> <p>There was some evidence of inconsistencies in how students were advised about the requirements of the assignments - and therefore the way in which they responded. This came through both from the assignments themselves and from the student panel. Lack of communication from with the whole tutor team seemed to be at the heart of this.</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>Assessments are similar in style, standard and scope as my own institution. It was clear that full and successful engagement with the assignments supported the students with their development as teachers. The assessment tasks enabled sound links with theory and practice as well as directly encouraging professional development and reflective practice. The majority of the work provided in the sample was either at the pass / fail boundary or the 70+. Pass / fail was clear and good, constructive feedback offered for which there was evidence that this impacted on improvement in later modules. My feeling was that grading was, perhaps, generous within the 70+ categories. However, the award of grades was well justified in the comments and feedback offered which centred very clearly around the marking rubric and there was good consistency.</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>I was able to see a number of students from across the full range on their assessed teaching placements and was in agreement with the judgements made. I observed some excellent mentoring on these visits, particular in supporting weaker trainees. It was also clear that university tutors were fully involved in intervention work to bring these trainees on.</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?	N
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?	N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y but see below
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 / N
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N

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

Q28 In a number of cases, marks were adjusted significantly (mostly upwards) as a result of second marking. This was more common for some particular second markers. It was not clear what the arrangements had been for internal standardisation / second marking / moderation and there was no record of either the second markers comments or of the discussion around grading. Second marking was not completed for the full sample and so it was not clear whether this second marking informed a standardisation process *before* marking of the full cohort or was completed afterwards, in which case, equity may need some consideration.

Q32 Not as well organised as in previous years. Information came late. Placement visit arrangements, whilst adequate for the purposes of the EE process in some cases were not as well planned and therefore not as informative as in previous years. This mattered less in my situation (as a continuing EE) as processes appeared not to have changed significantly.

Other comments

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

It is regrettable that the valuable contribution that the university have made to the region's schools is to end this year. Over my time as an external I have been able to draw upon and inform the very good practice evident on the course and valued the professional dialogue with colleagues.

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:

Head of School	
<i>School of Education</i>	
School of Education 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 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:

The support for students from university academics is clearly a real strength - particular where trainees had found placement to be a difficult experience and were struggling to meet the demands of QTS.

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.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

There were some minor changes made compared to previous years, mainly around making some of the subject sessions all-sciences rather than covering the same issues in separate science sessions. There were no significant changes made the course this year as knew it would be the last 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:

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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:

I must admit to being surprised and concerned about your finding that "overall, student satisfaction was lower this year than in previous years". The evidence we have suggests that this was not the case and I am concerned that your impression was otherwise. If the course was continuing, I would welcome being able to explore this further with you, as I want to make sure that the course team have a better and more accurate understanding of the students' experience. I also note your concern "around communication internally between staff, with external

partners and with students". I would welcome more information as this is clearly an area in which we would need to improve if the programme was going to continue.

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:

I am pleased that our "assessment methods for both the academic award and against the Teachers' Standards for QTS are highly appropriate". I note the following:

There was some evidence of inconsistencies in how students were advised about the requirements of the assignments - and therefore the way in which they responded. This came through both from the assignments themselves and from the student panel. Lack of communication with the whole tutor team seemed to be at the heart of this.

I am disappointed by this and recognise this is an issue. It is an area we would need to focus on if the programme was continuing.

You have raised some important issues about our assignment marking and External Examining arrangements. It is useful to know that "Pass / fail was clear and good, constructive feedback offered for which there was evidence that this impacted on improvement in later modules". I note that "grading was, perhaps, generous within the 70+ categories". This is an aspect that challenged us as a team each year as we tried to address broader concerns about courses not making good use of the full range of available marks. I think interpreting M-level criteria is a particular challenge for PGCE courses, where students are not able to demonstrate and develop M-level attributes across a complete MA degree. Again, this is an area we would wish to explore further if the course was continuing.

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:

You have raised a question about the transparency of the 2nd marking process. I note that you raised a similar point in your report for 2014/15, and I apologise that this has not been addressed fully. We did have extensive 2nd marking discussions, and we also had a pre-marking standardisation process where the entire tutor team met and discussed several assignments against the marking criteria. For the first time this year (2017/18) we used Grademark to do online marking. The 2nd marking discussions took place via email and not via comments in Grademark. I recognise that this meant there was no easily-available evidence trail and I perhaps should have ensured you were sent some of those emails. We would need to review how we use Grademark to capture evidence of 2nd marking if we were continuing with the course.

I am disappointed to read that our administrative arrangements (Q32) were:

Not as well organised as in previous years. Information came late. Placement visit arrangements, whilst adequate for the purposes of the EE process in some cases were not as well planned and therefore not as informative as in previous years. This mattered less in my situation (as a continuing EE) as processes appeared not to have changed significantly.

I do not know which information was late or why. The school visits programme was planned and communicated in advance. I would welcome further information about how this aspect could have been improved.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your External Examiner report for the Secondary Science PGCE programme (2016-17). Your efforts in examining our programme and the feedback you have provided are much appreciated. I only wish the University planned to continue to 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 it is "regrettable that the valuable contribution that the university have made to the region's schools is to end this year".

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 for Science 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.