

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:	Education
Subject(s):	Mathematics
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Secondary PGCE
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PGCE

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. The quality of mentoring students whilst in school. The mentors were extremely professional and fully familiar with the course requirements. Students valued the warmth, enthusiasm and approachability of the mathematics subject leader.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

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
Ensure that the quality of university of provision is consistent across all elements and any external or part-time contributors are fully aware of how their contribution fits with the overall provision.

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.	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 / 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 / N
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y / N
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y / N
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>Whilst the overall programme design is appropriate, this final year of presentation has failed to maintain the high quality of delivery usually associated with the programme. This could, at least in part, be attributed to the decision to close the programme.</p> <p>Students reported feeling that the university elements were 'just filling time' and 'lacked coherence', that there was 'no follow up on assignments' and tutors failed to model the teaching, learning and assessment practices students were encouraged to adopt in school e.g. balance of tutor input and student activity.</p> <p>Students felt that overall programme communication and organisation was poor.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<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 final assignment requires students to undertake a small scale research project into their practice. Of the small sample available to me, students did not appear to appreciate the difference between practitioner enquiry and action research. In one assignment, a student asserted she was undertaking action research and taught a single lesson. Whilst there were many strengths in that particular assignment the lack of understanding of different research paradigms was a cause for concern, suggesting a lack of adequate preparation.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<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 assignment briefs were not explicitly linked to the programme intended learning outcomes. All three assignments required individual written assignments. Were the programme to continue, it would be worth considering using a wider variety of assessment strategies e.g. group tasks, presentations.</p> <p>The themes of the three assignments are appropriate to initial teacher education: behaviour; teaching, learning and assessment; and small-scale teacher enquiry. The assessment criteria are clear and evidence of second marking and moderation was made available.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y / N
<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 assignments provided opportunities for students to reflect on their experience drawing on relevant literature, thus supporting their development as critically reflective practitioners. The feedback indicated strengths and gave</p>		

guidance on how to improve. Many students responded well to this advice maintaining or improving their performance across the three assignments.

The academic standards are consistent with those on comparable PGCE courses with which I am familiar.

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

On the sample of assignments available to me, feedback did not challenge problematic notions e.g. 'ability', or sloppy use of language e.g. maths. It did not signpost further relevant reading, particularly on the failed assignment.

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 / N
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y / N
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y / N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y / N
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y / N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y / N
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y / N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y / N
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:

Course documentation was made available after the visit.

I was unable to attend the board, so cannot comment on 34 and 35.

Other comments

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

The partnership with local schools is strong. Students were generally pleased with the support received from school based mentors. The mentors were experienced teachers who had worked with the programme (and other ITE providers) over many years.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Dr S Pope

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	<i>School of Education</i>
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 comments:

The partnership with local schools is strong.

The quality of mentoring students whilst in school. The mentors were extremely professional and fully familiar with the course requirements. Students valued the warmth, enthusiasm and approachability of the mathematics subject leader.

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**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:

I am disappointed to read the comment:

Ensure that the quality of university provision is consistent across all elements and any external or part-time contributors are fully aware of how their contribution fits with the overall provision.

There are several issues here where I would have valued more information so that the tutor team could plan to take appropriate action. Unfortunately there is no scope to act on this feedback as the course is not continuing.

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:

I apologise for documentation not being sent out in a more timely manner.

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 very disappointed to read:

Whilst the overall programme design is appropriate, this final year of presentation has failed to maintain the high quality of delivery usually associated with the programme. This could, at least in part, be attributed to the decision to close the programme. Students reported feeling that the university elements were 'just filling time' and 'lacked

coherence', that there was 'no follow up on assignments' and tutors failed to model the teaching, learning and assessment practices students were encouraged to adopt in school e.g. balance of tutor input and student activity. Students felt that overall programme communication and organisation was poor.

There are several issues here where I would have valued more information so that the tutor team could plan to take appropriate action. Clearly some follow-up action would be needed. Unfortunately there is no scope to act on this feedback as the course is not continuing.

I note your comment about Maths students' "lack of understanding of different research paradigms". The tutor team has always experienced a tension between exploring a range of research paradigms and keeping the assignment requirements realistic within the constraints of a PGCE course. The final assignment had changed in recent years away from an action research cycle over three lessons, to a focus on one lesson. Unfortunately some of the language in the assignment brief had perhaps not been changed sufficiently to reflect the different nature of the task.

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:

In response to your comment that the "assignment briefs were not explicitly linked to the programme intended learning outcomes", I would want to look at this and it would be easily addressed in revised programme handbooks if the course was continuing.

I note your comments about the need for assignment feedback to "challenge problematic notions e.g. 'ability', or sloppy use of language e.g. maths". Again, these are issues we would like to take forward 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:

In response to Q25, because the assignments had not changed significantly from previous years they were not sent out in advance. I apologise for not ensuring this documentation was sent out.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your External Examiner report for the Secondary Maths 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.

It is somewhat frustrating 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 supportive comments and informal feedback during school visits and with the programme leader over the phone prior to the assessment boards was thought-provoking and very helpful. Thank you for your support.