

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016– 2017**

**Part A: General Information****Subject area and awards being examined**

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	School of Healthcare
<i>Subject(s):</i>	Psychotherapy and Counselling
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	MA Psychotherapy and Counselling
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	Masters of Arts

**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](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Quality Assurance**  
 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*

No areas require urgent attention

**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?*

Not applicable

**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*

Not applicable

## 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.*

The aims and learning outcomes are commensurate with similar Masters level programmes in other institutions.

The standards and competencies embedded in the MA represent rigorous practitioner training, reflect well the counselling and psychotherapy QAA benchmarks and are appropriate for a Masters 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.*

The aims and learning outcomes correlate with the QAA benchmarks for counselling and psychotherapy.

- 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.*

It is evident from student grades that the assessment methods appropriately test student performance against learning outcomes

- 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*

Student performance on the MA is comparable with cohorts in other HEIs providing similar M-level counselling training. Student achievement across the modules represents a good level of academic competence and indicates good student engagement with tutors and the learning and teaching community they collaboratively create – as evidence by their annual research conference. The External Examiner attended the 2016-17 event and was highly impressed by the quality of the presentations.

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

Practice placements, appropriately, continue to provide a central theme for trainee counsellors. The experience of applying theory into practice within a placement setting provides students the context in which to develop their confidence and competence as a practitioner.

Student learning is assessed through practice portfolios which appropriately assess different components of the placement experience (including the supervisory process and content, with comment from the student's supervisor; critical reflection upon practice; recording of sessional work).

Tutor feedback on practice components is of a good quality and provides valuable material upon which can build learning and future assignments. Tutor comments link to module learning outcomes and supports students with ongoing practice development.

- 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.*

The MA was subject to review and module changes in 2015-16.

The programme continues to provide an excellent quality practitioner training and is a well-respected programme.

- 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.*

The MA programme lead is a key contributor to the knowledge base in the counselling and psychotherapy field. External Examiner discussion with students from the Masters course indicates that they value this and it serves as impetus for their successful completion of their degree. When students were met by the examiner, it was clear that some were keen to continue their studies through research degrees.

There are evident opportunities for staff-student collaboration to translate dissertations into publishable papers in peer reviewed journals. This could be further developed to form an integral part of the course completion and to build on staff research outputs for REF purposes.

**8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

Not applicable

**For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements**

**9. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements**

Not applicable

**The Examination/Assessment Process**

**10. 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.*

The material was sufficient for External Examiner purposes.  
In addition, the Examiner was able to meet with students from the course, as well as the full teaching team who deliver the Masters programme.

**11. 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.*

The tutor and admin team are excellent at providing relevant materials, plus additional information as required.  
The quality administrators are also very helpful and provide timely and welcome reminders on due documentation, for busy External Examiners!

**12. 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?**

Yes

**13. 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

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

Yes

**15. 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?**

Yes  
Attending Board of Examiners meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

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

Yes

**Other comments**

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

9 February 20187

Dear

**Re External Examiner's Report 2016-2017 – MA in Psychotherapy and Counselling**

I should like, on behalf of the team, to thank you for your very supportive external examiner's report.

Your recognition that the programme is well respected and provides an excellent quality training is very much appreciated. The team works hard to ensure that the students receive an excellent experience whilst undertake the programme.

Thank you for noting the quality of feedback provided to students to enhance their learning. The team plans to improve this further in the coming year by more explicitly demonstrating the alignment of module assessment and the marks awarded to the learning outcomes.

Thank you also for your appreciation of the research-led nature of the team's teaching. The team will continue to build on student engagement in research and publishing through participation in the team's research activities and will encourage them to consider furthering their studies by undertaking research degrees

The team would like to thank you for your involvement with the programme over the last year and in particular for meeting with them and the students. They look forward to continuing to work with you in the current session.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Director of Student Education