

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QAT Received 16/10/2017

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	<i>Social Work</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	HECS 1115, HECS 1114, HECS 2208, HECS 2212, HECS 3254, HECS 3153, HECS 3211 and HECS 3029
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA (Hons.) Social Work, MA Social Work

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.
n/a

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
None

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

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?	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
I have found that the teaching on the programme is similar to other social work academic programmes. What I have noted is the quality of feedback given to students and clear guidance as to how students can gain a high mark.

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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i> <i>The programme is structure to meet the HCPC standards and the PCF requirements. The modules taught have clear outcomes and reflect the specialist areas which need to be addressed in a social work programme.</i></p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<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> <i>This is most evident in the final year of the social work programme, with students producing some very good research projects using a range of source material and applying this material to social work settings.</i></p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	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
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here: The students undertaken a range of placements, which meet the required standards.</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here: The HCPC requirements are met.</i></p>		

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>		
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: The students on the programme show a high level of academic ability in both their written work and placement portfolios.</i> <i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></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?	N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	
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?	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
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: There is a clear and concise process regarding the progression and awards process.</i>		

Other comments

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

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Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Director of Student Education
Faculty / School of:	School of Healthcare
Address for communication:	The University of Leeds 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 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

Thank you for commenting on the quality of feedback the students receive and how this could be used developmentally to guide them to higher marks. This is an area that the team has invested in to facilitate student progression throughout the programme and consequently their overall experience. Thank you also for acknowledging the strength of the final year dissertations and the quality of the work that students are producing.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

It is pleasing to receive your comments on the quality of the placement circuit and the appropriateness of placements. This is an area going forward with the Leeds and Wakefield Teaching partnership that the team hopes to continue to develop and has clear plans for a move to a more comprehensive statutory placement offer in the first level placement as well as maintaining our current statutory provision for all final year students.

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:

No areas for urgent attention were identified.

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:

No areas of concern were raised. The team would like to thank you for your offer to support the recently appointed external examiner to the programme and we will work with you to facilitate this link.

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 your positive comments to these questions.

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:

It is pleasing to note your positive comments.

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:

Thank you for confirming that you are content with the arrangements for progression and awards.

Other comments

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

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QA Team received 18/09/2017

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	School of Healthcare
Subject(s):	Social Work
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BA Social Work MA Social Work
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA and MA

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 strong support for student learning among the University staff team reflected, for the most part, in the quality of feedback. Most feedback is comprehensive and should be helpful to the recipients, highlighting the key issues in academic content, construction and/or presentational aspects of individual submissions.
- Accessible and effective study skills support.
- An appropriately focussed and well organised curriculum.
- The variety of approaches deployed in both teaching and assessment which are both rigorous and developmental.
- The opportunity provided to myself as External Examiner to discuss issues with the course team when I attend the University.
- A practice which I particularly value is that of markers providing a review in the MAB proforma of overall performance in an assessment. In my view, this is exemplary practice which I now recommend to other programmes.
- The organisation and structure of the practice portfolios: consistent presentation facilitates moderation at both individual and comparative levels.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

The continuing development of on-line submission and assessment.

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

As repeatedly noted during my 4 years as external examiner, I do question appropriateness of the requirement for an external's signature on the multiplicity of 'catch-up' spreadsheets. In the course of the year, I receive numerous spread-sheets for signing apart from those immediately connected to pieces of work to be reviewed. I have to accept on trust the veracity of these additional spread-sheets – I feel slightly uncomfortable about this but am anxious not to disrupt the administration. However, I do think provision should be made for these admin 'catch-ups' to be dealt with internally. I have not kept count this year but, as matter of record, between July 2014 and March 2015, I faxed 52 spread-sheets to the admin team.

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 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?	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

The areas of good practice noted above have evolved and strengthened during my period as external examiner. Changes made to the programmes, as I have been made aware of them, are appropriate responses to a constantly changing practice environment. Problems in writing skills and presentation appear to have lessened over the years of my involvement. The available remedial facilities appear to be accessible and effective.

There appears to be no scope for movement on the administrative issue noted above.

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

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

Both the BA and MA programmes meet external requirements for a programme leading to a social work qualification and professional registration. The team have worked hard to maintain, further develop and implement, an imaginative and stretching curriculum relevant to attaining these. Aims and ILOs are prepared against external benchmarks and the standards achieved by students, as I have seen them so far, are, at least, on a par or better than those I see or have seen on other undergraduate and postgraduate social work qualifying programmes.

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)

Students reveal in their assignments an appropriate knowledge of relevant research and undertake practice related research as a component in their assessment. They learn the importance of, and the skills to evaluate, research based evidence as a key underpinning for practice. Hopefully, in some cases, an interest has been stimulated which may lead in due course to an academic career.

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?	Y
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
I have reviewed a sample of practice portfolios and assignments. In the light of this evidence, I am confident that the practice components of the programmes are developing the requisite knowledge, understanding, skills and values to meet registration requirements and produce effective newly qualified practitioners.		
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>		
Both the BA and MA programmes meet external requirements for a programme leading to a social work qualification and professional registration of its graduates by the Health and Care Professions Council.		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<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>		
From the evidence of assessed assignments which I have reviewed, the quality of University teaching appears to be strong. The variety of assessment mechanisms, which provide learning opportunities in their own right, appears to be replicated in the range of teaching and learning approaches deployed.		
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>		
As is always the case, the standard of student performance is variable. The most highly rated assessments reveal very strong abilities to achieve understanding and the capacity to evaluate and critique. The lower marked assignments revealed gaps in required knowledge, were poorer in analysis and structure and usually exposed weaknesses in basic literacy skills. It was apparent that the course team were aware of such learning issues; remedial facilities are available and possible underlying issues are addressed.		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		

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?	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?	N See below
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	N/A See below
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	N/A See below

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

Due to a mix up over dates I was unable to attend the PAB this session. However, I have attended examination boards in each of my previous years. They were conducted efficiently and with due process. As I understand and have observed the processes, mitigating circumstances are well covered both within the submission processes for individual assignments and at the various Boards

I have felt on occasions that turn-around times for my reviewing, so that assessed work can be presented to the periodic MABs, are unreasonably tight.

I have noted above my reservations about receiving ad hoc results spread-sheets for signing, apart from those immediately connected to pieces of work to be reviewed.

Administrative colleagues are unfailingly helpful.

Other comments

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

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Director of Student Education	
School of Healthcare	
The 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

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Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

Thank you for identifying a number of areas of good practice, which include support for student learning, an appropriately focussed and well organised curriculum, and the variety of approaches deployed in both teaching and assessment. It is pleasing to note that you appreciate the opportunities provided to discuss issues with the course team when you attend the University. The team, too, finds these opportunities invaluable and greatly values your input to the on-going development of the programme. Thank you also for acknowledging the value of markers providing a review in the MAB proforma of overall performance in an assessment. This process has now been successfully in operation for some time and has greatly enhanced the quality of discussion at the MAB. The team is pleased that you consider the organisation and structure of the practice portfolios ensures a consistent presentation and as a consequent facilitates moderation at both individual and comparative levels.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Thank you for acknowledging the progress being made in terms of online submission and assessment. It is an area that the team continues to develop and the next stage of this development is contained in the validation of the new programme.

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 concerns regarding the number of documents requiring your signature are duly noted and we know has been an on-going issue of concern for you. The procedures the School follows conform to University requirements and are being reviewed as part of our continual improvement process. However, the team will consider the processing of results for students who are completing a module or their programme out of sequence with the main cohort to see if it is possible to reduce the number of separate requests for your consideration without impacting on the students' ability to progress or complete their studies.

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 your positive comments in this section.

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 your very positive remarks, in particular your comment around the work of the whole team in facilitating the course, which is greatly appreciated.

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:

Once again thank you for your very positive comments. Your acknowledgement of the work the team has undertaken to address students' remedial learning issues is very welcome.

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:

It is pleasing to note that you are broadly content with the arrangements for progression and awards. The team does apologise that on occasions there have been some tight turn around requests and is very grateful for your co-operation in responding to these in order to facilitate student progression. The team will work to ensure that, as far as possible, this does not recur in the current session. Your concerns regarding the signing of results sheets has been responded to above.

Your complimentary comments on the support you receive from the administrative staff have been forwarded to the relevant individuals. Thank you very much for acknowledging this, which is greatly appreciate by all concerned.

Other comments

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

The team looks forward to continuing to work with you throughout the current session.