

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:	Medicine
Subject(s):	<i>Audiology</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

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.
I have not observed anything that I wouldn't consider to be good practice within the programmes or processes.

One specific thing I would comment on is that the team are generally really good at providing feedback to help students improve, even on some exams (e.g. Advanced Audiology). E.g. by identifying a small number key areas for improvement (rather than overwhelming students) and examples of how to improve. It would be worth sharing this practice more widely. E.g. I occasionally saw feedback such as "analyse rather than describe" which would have been much more useful had it shown what it meant for that piece of work (i.e. show what analyse would have looked like) to help the student understand what was meant. As I say, some feedback did this or similar which was very good.

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 This is my first year as ExEx

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?	Not to my knowledge

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y / N
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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 a 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

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.

There could be greater consistency in the formulation of learning outcomes according to best practice such as suggested by <<>>. For example, some are vague or lack a descriptor that a student could directly demonstrate (e.g. "understand"). It was not clear to me from the module handbooks alone whether learning objectives or knowledge outcomes are assessed and it would be reasonable for students to be confused too.

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)

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:
Follows national standard practice in audiology

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here: No concerns

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	N
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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.

Most but not all do. This is probably because of my point above about some of the ILOs. Otherwise no concerns. The assessment outcomes indicate a strong quality of teaching and learning.

HECS3077 ILOs includes synthesis and analysis of data although there doesn't seem to be much of that expected in the assignment and apparent in the work

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

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:

No concerns

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

A common piece of feedback I gave on exams was that marking guides were sometimes not clear about what sort of answer is worth a mark. This made it difficult to always be clear about the academic standards expected and that there would be clear and consistent expectations through the exam and in the marking. It also made it difficult to be confident that another examiner, e.g. if needed to replace the module lead due to illness etc, would mark in the intended way. I am absolutely not suggesting that marking guides should be heavily prescriptive but I do think it should be clear in all marking guides what sort of response warrants certain marks.

The marking scheme for some assessments is generic (e.g. HECS3077, HECS3263). How do students know what's expected of them in the particular assignment, given that the assignments can be quite different in what's expected that students have to do?

One 3-hour exam seems rather a big ask for HECS2195, covering material that audiology students are often not massively thrilled by.

Of the Year 3 dissertations I saw, the examiners gave very helpful general feedback (on what was good and what could be improved), which also serves as very good justification for the mark. They also gave copious individual comments throughout the document – that must have taken a long time. But to what end? The literature on feedback suggests that students don't act on copious feedback and it's usually better to identify a few key issues and give some examples of each. And how would they act on it if it's the last piece of work they do? I only mention in case it helps you to reflect on whether to invest your time/effort, not that what you're doing is unhelpful (because students probably won't read it anyway).

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?	N
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>The main challenge I experienced this year was with admin. E.g. I wasn't provided with module handbooks before being asked to comment on assessments and there didn't seem to be a plan for when I'd be provided with assessments and be expected to respond, making it difficult to plan work. I had to chase up date for exam board etc. It would be much more helpful next if I could be provided with all the module handbooks at the beginning of the year as well as a plan for when I'd be sent stuff and be expected to send it back. (Even this report was provided to me late.) The operation of the board was good from my perspective.</p>		

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*:	Director of Classified Undergraduate Studies
Faculty / School of:	<i>FMH – School of Medicine</i>
Address for communication:	<<>>
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

It is pleasing to note that feedback provided on student assessments is considered an example of good practice. The programme team understands the importance of feedback and reflects collectively on what constitutes good feedback.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Not applicable.

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 urgent matters 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:

It is noted that no mentoring arrangements are in place for <<>>. Whilst a mentor is not formally required given <<>> previous external examiner experience, a mentor can be arranged for <<>> if this is felt to be helpful.

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:

Comments regarding learning outcome clarity and consistency have been noted. These will be reviewed to ensure consistency and clarity. Information provided to students regarding learning outcomes and their assessment (e.g. within module handbooks) will also be reviewed.

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 commented that whilst data analysis and synthesis are expected learning outcomes for HECS3077, these may not be evident in student work. Within this module students are able to choose from a variety of methodologies, ranging from empirical research, audit to scoping and systematic reviews. All these methodologies provide

students with the opportunity to demonstrate data analysis and synthesis (i.e. data in the form of clinical outcomes collected via clinical audit or data as extracted from systematic review) and is assessed in students' written work.

Suggestions regarding the need for increased detail within exam marking schemes have been noted. In the future module leaders will be asked to provide more detailed marking schemes.

The comment regarding generic marking schemes for written pieces of work is also noted. This will be addressed by work already ongoing related to the 'Leeds Expectations of Assessment and Feedback' initiative. A guiding principle of this initiative is that all assessments should have customised marking criteria. In response to this, module leaders are currently reviewing marking criteria with a view to being more specific for each assessment.

The module HECS2195 is to be replaced by the module ARCS2195 for the 2017/18 session and the exam has been changed to a 2 hour duration.

We are grateful for the comments regarding detailed feedback provided for the research project assessment (HECS3077). The programme team will reflect on how much time and effort is invested in providing feedback on this piece of work. However, it is noted that students perceive this piece of work as the most substantial that they undertake and therefore value detailed feedback. The principle of lifelong learning as a health profession is also relevant here; whilst this is the last piece of work undertaken for the degree, the feedback provided on this piece of work could be beneficial for work undertaken by the student in the future (e.g. departmental audit, writing for publication, further study).

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:

We apologise for the administrative difficulties experienced by <<>> this year. The Student Education Service (SES) team that supports the Healthcare Sciences programmes has been working with reduced staff FTE during 2016/17 following a resignation. All vacant posts have now been filled and the team restructured for the 2017/18 academic year.

Other comments

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

Not applicable.