

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

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

Faculty / School of:	Medicine and Health
Subject(s):	<i>Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MA in Health Management Planning and Policy
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	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.
This has been the final year in a four-year spell as external examiner. Throughout I have been impressed with the quality of dialogue with myself and with each other as members of staff. This has produced an environment of regular self-reflection by staff on their approaches to teaching and to the learning experience of students. Staff have rightly been regularly complimented on the quality of the feedback on assignments given to students.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
There is regular increase in the diversity of assessment methods employed within the course.

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
Staff should review the comparative weightings given to elements within assignments. Group presentations generally count for 20% or 30%, but in some cases this is as high as 50%. Individual poster presentations generally count for at least 50%. This variation in weighting may not be inappropriate but it should be reviewed across modules to ensure that there is underlying consistency.
A number of optional modules failed to run this year. The implications of this should be reviewed to ensure that students who may have wished to follow these options are not 'short-changed' in their educational experience. Staff should consider the possibility of making M&E a core module. I believe there is evidence that students are currently handicapped in their pursuit of other options if they have not followed this option – or, put more positively, that there is good evidence of synergy between options. {This could potentially be within the context of a fuller project/programme planning module}. I also believe that a similar case could also be made for making Health Systems Development for PHC a core module. Both of these modules are currently taken by the majority of students.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	N/A
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	N/A

3.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Mentor?	N/A
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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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y previously

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 course provides a progressively enhancing educational experience. The move towards an MPH course (the year after this one) will be of particular interest as the course has historically been grounded in the social sciences. Exposure to other analytic traditions (particularly more quantitative ones) should provide welcome enhancement.

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)?	N/A
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.
 This is a well-developed course, having progressed and adapted over the past thirty years, which provides for a fairly unique learning experience.

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)
 Staff at the Nuffield have traditionally been heavily involved in international consultancy work – effectively undertaking applied research. This is vital for them to retain an up-to-date knowledge of the current status of health systems and current debates around their development. Recently this has frequently take the form of longer-term institutional development (working with academic colleagues in-country to develop their own teaching programmes). This is very worthwhile and should be encouraged.

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:
 Students who opt to undertake the Health Systems Research Module are provided with an excellent grounding

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

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>The variety in assessment methods employed enables these to be tailored to the ILOs of particular modules; but (as above) I would request that a check be made of comparability of weighting of elements across modules. Student performance in assessments generally reflects well on the quality of teaching and learning (not only in the module being assessed but in other modules previously pursued.)</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>This has been an interesting cohort of students, (and I understand a quite demanding one), with some achieving an excellent standard of work. I have been pleased to see a fuller use made of the range of marks available. Where students have struggled I am happy with the level of support provided and, across the full group, very satisfied with the comparability against other courses.</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 have observed (and commented on) a contrast between those markers who adopt a 'glass half empty' approach to providing feedback – concentrating on the weaknesses in assignments – and those that adopt a 'glass half full' approach – concentrating on the achievements in assignments. I think that this (to a small degree) is reflected in marks awarded for assignments, or in particular dissertations, and should be kept under review.</p>		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's 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?	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?	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> Students at the Nuffield have always enjoyed a high level of support from non-academic and academic staff alike. It has been gratifying to see that this has not altered despite the increasing pressures and demands upon staff.</p>		

Other comments

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

I have made some quite detailed comments on individual module assignments and on dissertations. These have always been well received.

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 Postgraduate Studies *on behalf of* the Director of Student Education

Faculty of Medicine and Health School of Medicine

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

We appreciate your confirmation of the fact that the programme has “continued to pioneer new mode of teaching and learning”. We are pleased that you believe that the programme compares favourably with similar UK Masters courses. It is the aim of the programme team to maintain high standards of teaching, and we appreciate the need for constant innovation and updating.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The School notes that you feel the quality of our teaching appears high and that our assessment methods and assessment criteria are diverse and appropriate.

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 suggestion to review the comparative weighting given to elements within assignments is well received. The School requires that assessments are aligned to the learning outcomes of each module and the weight assigned to different components of assessments are guided by that. Your suggestion will however be discussed at the next Teachers Meeting of the Nuffield Centre and where the present weightings need amending, this will be considered in and acted upon in good time for next year’s assessment process.

You have also suggested to the programme team to consider the possibility of making Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Health Systems Development for PHC compulsory modules for HMPP students. I can confirm that the programme team have proposed a new Principles of HMPP module that will be launched along with the new MPH HMPP programme in September. The new module is designed to focus more on programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. The assignment will involve requiring students to design a project proposal that will have elements of planning, monitoring and evaluation. The Health Systems Development for PHC module is being thoroughly reviewed and strengthened in consideration of the changing context in low-middle income countries. The new module will focus on health systems leadership in the context of universal health coverage and HMPP students will be encouraged to subscribe to this new module.

You expressed concerns that a number of optional modules failed to run in the last academic year. This was partly due to the shortfall of student numbers in 2016/17. The policy of Nuffield Centre is not to run

any option module with less than six students as it not cost effective and does not provide good quality learning experience due to limited sharing of experience. Fortunately, for 2017/18 all the optional modules are running and every student is able to take a module of her/his choice.

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:

The School notes your positive and encouraging confirmation of the hard work of the HMPP team.

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 on the appropriateness of learning outcomes and our academic standards. The teaching staff are nevertheless working hard to maintain and improve upon our training programmes to ensure that they remain compatible with similar courses in the country and across Europe.

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:

Thank you for noting that the quality of the teaching and feedback appear high and that the assessment methods and assessment criteria are appropriate.

Your observation regarding marking style of different colleagues using 'half-full' and 'half-empty glass' example is interesting. The team will raise this in the teachers meeting and encourage colleagues to focus on student achievements and critical but positive feedback.

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:

The School is grateful to you for identifying a number of areas of good practice in the area of progression and award process.

Other comments

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

The programme leader, programme coordinator and teaching staff of the Nuffield Centre have enjoyed working with you as External Examiner and acknowledge your attention to detail and your evident concern for the students' learning experience. Your comments have been very much appreciated. They find the inputs of external examiners extremely helpful. The HMPP course has benefited greatly from your suggestions and advice over the years. The School appreciates your valuable contribution and active participation in the assessment process.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Nuffield Centre for International Health and development, I would therefore like to express our sincere thanks to you for your valuable contribution to the programmes.