

**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:	Leeds Institute of Health Sciences
Subject(s):	<i>International Health</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Masters Programme
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

**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.*

In terms of good practice, the attention to pedagogy manifest in the guidance and feedback to students on this course is exemplary. That has nothing to do with me but it certainly represents good practice, so I acknowledge and support it.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

Over the past 18m I have made various suggestions in relation to assessments and marking (ability to sufficiently discriminate between weaker, able and most able students) and module balance (need for a cross-check across optional module choices to ensure students meet ILOs for the MSc as a whole). I always feel my suggestions are taken seriously and are considered subsequently at an appropriate internal committee.

For example, last year I queried the ability of one module assessment to be discerning enough to distinguish the brightest students as the marks for that module *averaged* a distinction which seemed inappropriate, even though last year was a strong group of students. This year the assessment for that module was changed, to include an element of critical discussion of the literature for the topic. The resulting grades were much better spread.

Last year and earlier this year further discussions were had regarding another assessment and its ability to stretch the brightest and a further change was agreed for next year to require students to include the application of a framework that is introduced during the module.

**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**      **N/A**

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

3.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Mentor?	
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**For Examiners completing their term of appointment** **N/A**

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	

*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.*

Overall the structure, design and ILOs of the programme is excellent – it maintains 6 core modules and a research project then gives a breadth of choice for three further optional modules.

Aims and intended learning outcomes are always clearly articulated and appropriate for the Masters course.

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)*

Nuffield is not a research-intensive institution, but most of its staff are involved in research. Much of the teaching arises from research and (particularly) practice experience of the staff; there is scope for more of course.

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?	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>Over the MSc programme the students are given opportunities to demonstrate the achievement of the aims and ILOS and their learning. Overall really excellent guidance and feedback to students with detailed, generally very well-designed assignments.</p> <p>I did query the heavy use of presentational assessment methods in two modules in which these form 50% and 100% of the total marks. Presentational materials (posters, power-point presentations) enable students to boost their overall score with non-academic input and I'm not sure how appropriate it is at Masters level to have modules majority/fully scored on these skills, though they are clearly important. I made some suggestions on how these assessments might be modified.</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>There was a good range of marks this year with one outright distinction and two discretionary distinctions (one confirmed after consideration of special circumstances), four merits and two passes, with two other students to complete next year and one to resit.</p> <p>Performance is comparable to other masters programmes on international health.</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>		

## 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 (in my first year)
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y (in my first year)
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 (but see text below)
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	N/A
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?	N/A

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

The administrative arrangements at the Nuffield Centre are excellent.

I attended both of this year's Board of Examiners meetings in person, which were very efficiently run on both occasions this year, despite strike action depleting the overall number of attendees at the final EB meeting (but not so that it was iniquate). I was satisfied with the recommendations.

There was one case brought for special circumstances consideration which I thought was handled very appropriately at the external examiners meeting.

HOWEVER: please note that I was not invited to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting (thus I returned a N/A rather than N above) so I do not know how the special circumstances were communicated nor how the meeting itself was run. The Programme Director for the MSc International Health informed me of the outcome (and its reasoning) – which I was satisfied with.

#### Other comments

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

All arrangements, contacts and communications with the Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development staff are excellent.

However, I have had no communication or interaction from the School of Medicine, Institute of Health Sciences or the wider university administration – including from the office to which this form goes. I have received no instructions from the University this year, other than through Nuffield – administrators there found and forwarded these forms (which are very different this year); no one from the University administration has chased me for this form (which may be late). I think it would be helpful to have an email from the central (or other relevant) administration each year, ahead of the exam board meetings, containing the relevant form with expected submission date.

Last year I did receive an email acknowledgement of my report submission and later a written response from the School, which was appreciated.