

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

QAT Received 06/10/2017

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016 – 2017

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Medicine
Subject(s):	Molecular Medicine
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Molecular Medicine
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

This programme benefits specifically from the central part played by research experience for the students. The taught modules are all research focussed, and each student undertakes an individual research project. Both the taught courses and research projects are offered by local experts in relevant research.

Enhancements made from the previous year

There have been small-scale enhancements to the patterns and processes of individual assessments, but there have been no major changes, as the overall offering is already in very good shape.

Matters for Urgent Attention

There are no issues needing urgent attention.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	N/A
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	N/A
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

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

My overall experience has been very positive. This is a well organised, impeccably administered and justly popular degree programme. The management team have been careful to set up the programme in an orderly and effective way, but where I have suggested changes they have been very responsive and helpful in applying them. As a result I feel that I have been able to contribute some small improvements, mainly in the areas of consistency and documentation of assessment, to the running of an already good programme.

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
The programme has a carefully judged blend of research background, research skills and research practice elements. These are presented and assessed appropriately and together make a very effective package of research training for students.		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
See above; research pervades the curriculum and is its raison d'être.		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
Although not part of an integrated Ph.D., this programme nevertheless provides excellent training for a Ph.D.		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
The different elements of the curriculum have assessments that align very well with the ILOs. As well as assessments that focus on research methodology and skills, there is a strong element of presentation (written, poster and seminar) in the assessment mix, which is highly useful for future research 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
The students are assessed at an appropriate level with a diverse range of assessment styles. The students show a range of performance but are generally able to achieve relatively high marks overall. There are some elements of assessment that can return unusually high marks, which I have explored with the degree management, but I would judge the main cause of the relatively high marks in this degree to be a combination of selective entry and good student response to the programme.		
<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
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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?	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>Availability of marked work via the SharePoint site allowed me to review nearly all examples of assessed work for all students, together with the marks and comments from the Leeds examiners. I was able to feed back to the Leeds examiners my agreement with the standards applied and the documentation of the assessment process. I visited Leeds to attend both examinations board meetings, in February and in September, and I was satisfied with the conduct and conclusions of both meetings. The outcome of consideration at the School Special Circumstances meeting was properly communicated to the examinations board meeting, and its recommendations were implemented.</p>		

Other comments

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

In my reports to Leeds as external examiner I have previously drawn attention to the shortcoming of this form as a means of reporting accurately and usefully on the standards and conduct of degree programmes. Coming back to this question yet again, I find one deficiency stands above all others: I have answered 35 individual questions about standards, assessment and progression, but where are the questions about the student experience and the added value that this programme provides? This is particularly relevant to this programme as I think it does very well in both respects.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Director of Postgraduate Studies
Faculty / School of:	<i>Faculty of Medicine and Health / School of Medicine</i>
Address for communication:	Clinical Sciences Building, level 5 St James's University Hospital LS9 7TF
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 gat@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

The School thanks _____ for hard work over the last 4 years. We have benefitted from rigorous approach and are very pleased that _____ comments are favourable. _____ has commented on the balance of content providing good research training, the high quality of the student experience we provide, and the benefit of 'added value'.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

N/A

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:

N/A

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:

This is the final year that _____ has acted as EE. _____ has mentored his successor

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:

finds our learning outcomes are at an appropriate standard for Masters level. 'The programme has a carefully judged blend of research background, research skills and research practice elements. These are presented and assessed appropriately and together make a very effective research training for students.' We conclude that the standards and balance of the Molecular Medicine programme are appropriate.

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:

concludes that different elements have assessments that align very well with ILOs. comments on the diverse assessment styles, but notes that some elements score highly. Although there is no cause for concern, we would like to record that his comment is kept in mind year on year with regard to assessment.

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 would like to thank for hard work and insight. This year reviewed and was satisfied with all assessed work provided on Sharepoint, which was the vast majority of the total.

Other comments

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

also noted the very good student experience and the added value the programme provides.