

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:	Faculty of Medicine and Health
Subject(s):	<i>Psychology</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc/PGDip Psychological Approaches to Health Modules: PSYC5310M; PSYC5320M; PSYCH5600M; PSYC5611M; PSYC5620M; PSYC5623M; PSYC5642M; PSYCH5651M; PSYC5670M
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc/PGDip Psychological Approaches to Health

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 assessment criteria for the Systematic Research Review are very clear and this means that students know exactly what they need to do to gain good marks. This is really helpful.

The level of feedback provided for the first two tasks of the Advanced Research methods is impressive - lots of detail which enabled the student to know exactly what they did well and poorly and why they received the mark that they did. It was also good to see reflection on the wording of a question and the change that was suggested.

The Research project module included a broad range of interesting projects and I enjoyed reading them. It was particularly interesting to see the different projects produced by students who worked together in a group and produced very different standards of work. This is reassuring in that the module is clearly assessing the individual student rather than the group.

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 programme is about to change as MSc PATH will be delivered alongside MPsych in 17/18. This has resulted in some changes to modules and assessments in the coming year. My recommendation that there were too many assessment tasks (with similar LOs) for Advanced Research Methods has resulted in a reduction in the number of tasks for 17/18.

Feedback is clearer and more consistent across modules. It is made very clear to students how they could improve their work.

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

N/A

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

The programme gives the students an excellent understanding of the psychology of health and illness and a broad range of skills in terms of research methods and academic writing and communications.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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The whole course is clearly founded on research, both in terms of the content and the skills. Students undertake both a systematic review and research project and have training in a range of research methods. The modules clearly reflect the research undertaken by members of academic staff at Leeds.

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: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

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 range of assessment methods is broad and these are well-aligned with the learning outcomes. It is good to see that the assessment methods require students to apply their knowledge and to develop practical research and writing skills. It is clear from the quality of the work produced by the majority of students that the teaching and learning methods are excellent. Some of the highest quality work is extremely impressive for masters level students.</p> <p>Some of the weaker students struggled with the broad range of knowledge required by the MCQ examination for 'Health Psychology at Leeds'. This task required extensive revision of a wide number of areas and in depth knowledge and understanding of the research taught about and some students did very well on the task. However the team might reflect on the extent to which lower marks on this task reflect overall ability on the course.</p> <p>The group assessment task marks were very similar across all groups and thus might not be particularly useful in terms of differentiating between weaker and stronger students. While these are beneficial in terms of developing team-working skills it seems that they are not allowing strong students to perform well, while weaker students might have their marks somewhat inflated. This should be considered in mark weighting for those modules that include these tasks.</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>The students showed a range of levels of ability with some students struggling with some modules/assessment tasks while others have performed at a very high standard. This range of abilities is comparable with students on other similar 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>There are a wide range of assessment methods used in the programme and this means that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a wide variety of ways.</p> <p>The feedback provided to students was extensive and useful. It was good to see on most modules that feedback focused on three areas for improvement, and this was provided even for students who gained very high marks.</p> <p>It is important that internal moderators follow the code of practice for assessment and do not change individual marks during moderation. Also where there are any changes made to marks, that the feedback is adjusted to reflect the mark changes.</p> <p>Please make sure that the correct (Masters level) feedback sheets are used</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?	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?	N (see below)
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

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

I was provided with an appropriate range of scripts and moderation reports. It was clear to see on most modules why the marks were given. It was particularly clear for the systematic review and the first two tasks on the advanced research methods.

I was provided with a moderation report for most modules which clearly explained how moderation had happened and any recommendations that had arisen from the moderation. This was very helpful.

While I agree the marks for the examination scripts for 'Understanding, predicting and changing health behaviour' the scripts were not annotated and this meant that it was not entirely clear how the marking had been done. Very brief notes on what was good/poor on the scripts would have been helpful for and me and for the second marker. Exam scripts for other modules did include a rationale for the mark given.

Other comments

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

I'd like to thank _____ and _____ for their excellent organisation of the external examining process which made my job so much easier.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School

Psychology

University of Leeds

Leeds LS2 9 JT

*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 are grateful for your positive comments regarding our provision in relation to these 3 key modules (ARM, SRR and Research Project). It is extremely reassuring to learn of the value of some of our practices from our peers outside of the University.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Thank you for the positive comments regarding our processes. We are glad that the responses we have made to the issues previously drawn to our attention have been well received. We are quite sure that this has helped us to reflect on our methods of assessment and to improve the feedback provided to 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:

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:

N/A

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:

We are happy to read the positive feedback on standards, particularly about the broad range of research methods training and research led teaching that we provide.

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:

Your positive feedback on our range of assessment methods and the quality of our feedback is well-received, particularly as this is an area in which we are consistently trying to make improvements. We are also delighted to read that you deem our teaching and learning methods to be excellent and that you note some of the highest quality work to be extremely impressive for Masters level students. This is very reassuring.

We have noted your comment about the MCQ examination for the Health Psychology at Leeds Module and your suggestion to reflect on the extent to which lower marks on this task reflect overall ability on the course. This module has, however, now been withdrawn from the course.

We have noted your comment about the marks for group assessment tasks and how these might not be particularly useful for differentiating between weaker and stronger students. We have considered this in the mark weighting, for modules that include these tasks, to ensure that (within a module) the weighting of group tasks is less than or equal to that of individual tasks.

We will take on board your point about moderation and will ensure that feedback is adjusted where any changes are made to marks. We will also ensure that the correct (Masters level) feedback sheets are used by all markers.

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 the overall positive evaluation of this process.

We have noted your comment about the lack of annotation on the examination scripts for the 'Understanding, predicting and changing behaviour' module such that it was not entirely clear how the marking had been done. This feedback has been passed onto the relevant module leader.

Other comments

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

It was pleasing to note that our organisational arrangements were supportive for you in the examining process.