

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:	School of Food Science and Nutrition
Subject(s):	BSc Nutrition, BSc Food Science and Nutrition
Programme(s) / Module(s):	FOOD2201, FOOD2215, FOOD2260, FOOD3381, FOOD3390, FOOD2135, FOOD2150, FOOD2160, FOOD2165, FOOD2175, FOOD3050, FOOD3071, FOOD3340, FOOD3371
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.

Good practice: Good examples to share with colleagues were where module leaders and examiners provided students with excellent feedback offering support and encouragement, for example FOOD3381, FOOD3390, FOOD2260 and FOOD2160.

Good practice: The level of guidance and support provided by the Director of Student Education and the whole team to staff who take over modules (and also may be new to the School) is exemplary.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

This year external examiners were provided with a copy of the Assessment Map detailing the learning outcomes for all programmes at each level with the modular assessments, weightings, deadlines and feedback time. This document proved a very useful guide and overview for the programmes.

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

There were no aspects requiring 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?	n/a
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	n/a
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	n/a
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	n/a

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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>For both programmes, BSc Nutrition, and BSc Food Science and Nutrition the overall design is appropriate and relevant to the degree title and relevant professional contexts.</p> <p>The learning outcomes at each level are defined clearly, providing explicit statements about the expectations for progression and graduation from the programmes. Students meeting the learning outcomes are well prepared for postgraduate study and employment as professionals in nutrition and the food industry, or other sectors of employment.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>The academic team are very conscious of the need to maintain the overall coherence of the programmes and incorporate the expertise of the new staff involved in the delivery and work hard to ensure success. This is being achieved, for example, through appropriate, approved module changes that allow students to become involved in research work and undertake appropriate assessments. Examples included the use of recent journal articles in examinations and the range of topical research projects and research-informed coursework.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD: n/a</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here: n/a</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	AfN
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p> <p>The BSc Nutrition programme is accredited by the Association for Nutrition (AfN). The graduates of the BSc Nutrition programme are immediately able to register with AfN as Associate Registered Nutritionists. This qualification is increasingly being recognised as important for newly qualified graduates in the professional world of nutrition: it</p>		

provides an acknowledgement of success on an accredited degree programme that includes ethics and professional standards in the curriculum, and a clear route to full registration with further experience.

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>There was an interesting range of topics from across the disciplines of nutrition and food science covered in each programme; these were relevant to contemporary research interests in food production and manufacture, in nutrition and health. The assessment types ranged from written examination papers, practical reports, literature review, essays, case studies, posters, portfolios, reflective logs, oral presentations and reports with some peer assessment used. The marked assessments indicate that the teaching on all modules is up to date and allows students to reach their potential through the development of critical thinking, IT, teamwork and research skills to match the ILOs. The projects I read indicated that students are supervised well and by their final year they are able to work independently to produce high quality research reports.</p> <p>The assessments were very often applied in nature and they provided students with full and exciting opportunities to perform well in meeting the outcomes, and therefore to receive the appropriate high marks as a reward. For example, this is shown in FOOD3371 featuring teamwork for the Food Product Development Project (including presentations and product launch), and in the great use of contemporary material for coursework (presentation/portfolio/report) for the FOOD3381 Nutrition Policy and Public Health module, although here the standard deviation from the mean was low indicating there could be even further development to fully stretch the high flyers. Across the range of assessments I reviewed in both programmes I believe there is a tendency to limit marks at the top end for really excellent work, e.g. in FOOD3340 and in the project module FOOD3050 and I would encourage greater use of the marks available at this end of the scale where it is justified by exceptional work.</p> <p>There were no major issues regarding feedback to students; the group of students I met in February reported they generally had timely responses to their coursework submissions, and that they were encouraged to see their lecturers to obtain more detailed feedback. The quality of the feedback I saw on marked written work was appropriate and often exemplary.</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>The students on the two BSc programmes have responded very well to the challenges set in their assessments and they have mostly performed very well this year, but I believe the overall number of items of assessment at Level 2 limits the potential to stretch the most able students since they seem over-assessed compared with second year students at other institutions I am familiar with. The finalists I met during my February visit were enjoying final year study more than their previous year of academic study, commenting that they had found the volume of work and workload management more difficult at level 2. This is the second consecutive year that finalists have offered such comments (and without any prompting by external examiners). The students who undertook a placement year were, without exception, very appreciative of this opportunity to develop their skills and expertise; they valued this as a great strength of the degree programme and explained that their experiences were really helping them to use their expertise to achieve success in modules in their final year of study.</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>During my June visit the results of TEF were announced. In the case of the School of Food Science and Nutrition the standard of teaching and assessment is certainly in keeping with the standard of the Gold award; staff are dedicated and enthusiastic, the students clearly benefit from their expertise and this results in high standards in performance across the programmes.</p>		

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?	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:

The administrative arrangements were excellent. I was invited to visit the school in February to meet a group of current students, to see the development of the programmes running this year, and to meet with the other external examiner for Food Science and Nutrition. This visit provided a good opportunity to ask questions about the recent developments with the programmes, the assessments, and the experiences and aspirations of students on the programmes.

I was able to access all of the exam scripts and the marked written work for each module easily. A suitable sample of the work for each module was pre-selected from across the range of marks for me to scrutinise. I was able to see the marks awarded, justification for marks and feedback to students. The marking was accurate and fair.

During my summer visit, 24-25 June, I was able to meet individually with a number of the staff to discuss module delivery and the assessments. The staff were very well prepared and attentive during both of my visits, ensuring my queries were answered fully and that I had access to the information I requested.

On the second day of my June visit the Board of Examiners meeting was held and this was chaired well and efficiently. The administration of the Board was very smooth indeed: staff were prepared, well-organised, clearly aware of the procedures and pertinent regulations, and each student award was considered individually.

Other comments

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

n/a

Leeds
LS2 9JT

www.food.leeds.ac.uk



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Dear

Thank you for your External Examiner's report for 2016 – 2017. The School Taught Student Education Committee has now considered the report. Colleagues were pleased with your positive comments concerning the coherence of the programmes, the dedication of staff, the relevance of programme content to contemporary research interests in food production and in nutrition and health and School practice in feedback on coursework. The School is happy that administrative arrangements met all of your requirements, and that you found the provision of assessment maps useful.

You have noted concerns about over assessment at level two and that final year students have commented on the volume of work and workload management at that level. This has also been raised at student staff forums. In response, the School has a Teaching Enhancement Scheme (TES) group that has been looking at assessment in the programmes and some initial actions have been implemented to reduce some of the assessed work at level two. However, the review being undertaken by this group is not yet complete and we expected that there would be further reduction in assessed work, particularly at level two.

The School is highly appreciative of the work that you have carried out in your role as External Examiner, returning comments on examination papers with a short turn around and rapid responses to requests throughout the year. We appreciate you thoroughly checking examples of coursework and examination answers and providing some valuable insight and advice. Thank you for your continuing hard work and support that you have provided during discussions during your visits and through comments in your reports.

Yours Sincerely