

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17 QAT Received 29/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Medicine & Health
Subject(s):	Dentistry
Programme(s) / Module(s):	CP5
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MChD/ BChD

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.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

N/A

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

Consideration of double blind marking for written scripts

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

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

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
<i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<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>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y
<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)?	Y
<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 / N
<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>		
Can I please see a copy of the ILO blueprint with information on when and how these are met. I can confirm that a wide range of ILO's as set out by the GDC and assessed in other dental schools are assessed within the scrutiny I have observed.		
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
<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>		

Similar to other dental schools although I witnessed mainly average and poor students. I did not come across any who were excelling which is unusual during a period of external examining.

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

I was pleased that internal examiners were comfortable to approach me with specific dilemmas concerning grades for borderline students particularly when the context of the failure was specific to my clinical area of expertise.

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 / N Not scrutinised by me
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N Not scrutinised by me
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:

Other comments

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

Student Patient Case Presentations

I would like more information on how examiners have been asked to score with regard to complexity of the cases as a wide variety was presented.

I am aware that a small number of examiners did not receive the student cases until a few days before the exam- this should be avoided as far as possible with examiners having at least 2 weeks to look over these and agree on questions.

I would like further information on how examiners break up their scores for this part of the exam i.e. scores for the posters, scores for the verbal presentation given by the student, scores for the quality of work carried out in the mouth, scores for the students defence of their management and reflection on their learning.

Examiners should be careful not to continue questioning after the end of time buzzer has rang- I witnessed this practice more than once in different pairs of examiners.

Examiners should make sure they mark completely independently before coming to a consensus mark- should not even be making encouraging/discouraging noises!

Examiners should not change the marks in their white sheet to fit the blue following consensus discussion as this will negate any possibility of looking at inter examiner reliability.

Could external examiner be sent the cases for students they are scheduled to see?

I suggest setting a word limit for the posters- perhaps 650 max? (Teams could take a selection of posters they consider to be ideal and work out a desirable word count from that).

Limiting words should leave more unanswered questions which will provide guidance to examiners re questions.

Could E-posters be considered to decrease environmental impact?

Do the students submit evidence of patient consent with their posters- this might be a good opportunity to highlight an important ILO?

Student could perhaps submit a standardised table summarising diagnosis and treatment undertaken to help examiners consider complexity of cases in a more systematic way.

I would suggest that External examiners move more to assess consistency between examiner pairs rather than seeing the same examiners with different students- would have been better for me to observe 6 examiner pairs rather than just 2. If this were to be adopted a more consistent timing bell will be required.

Consensus mark sheets should have a place for external examiners signature to identify which students have been observed in this process.

I would like to know how many issues there were in relation to patients not attending. Should consideration be given to not having the patient present on the day- perhaps a standardised scoring matrix could be used by tutors on the patients last treatment session which can be provided for use along with posters on the examination day? This could be some kind of competence assessment which would avoid the issues of needing a patient to attend on examination day which is very stressful for the students when they turn up late or do not attend. This particular idea would certainly need to be worked on but I would be happy to be involved in that if that would help?

Should things remain as they are – there was potentially a lack of clear protocol re what happens if a patient does not turn up so regulations should be more transparent.

Examiners brief

Calibration exercise for Paeds questions- good discussion re exact questioning- how to guide students and clarification of points

Second case- again good discussion, decided to scrap behaviour management questions as too much to cope with in 7.5 mins.

Difficulty as restorative teachers marking Paeds stations- have to be taught appropriate answers which adds complication and some complications when students discussed issues a bit more off base with dangerous comments not being picked up.

Issue with timings of first 3 cases- plenty of time for OS/OM but not enough for Paeds.

Re comments- examiners should not have to re-write comments only additional bits should go on blue page.

Sensible use of professional judgement.

Good consistency among examiner pairs- differences evident but to be expected and indeed unavoidable.

Examiners should avoid telling a student the correct answer after they have given a less than optimal answer- this is poor exam technique and may be cause for student appeals if they claim that the correction made them go to pieces as they were aware that they had then said something wrong- a summative exam should not be seen as an opportunity to teach.

is particularly good at displaying “warm neutrality”

Need tissues at each station for upset students.

Written papers- need to be blind double marked (will need to photocopy papers if staff wish to write on them- will get marking time halved as well).

Clinical Practice papers- comments although away from candidates paper are still not double blind marked as second marker can see comments and marks from first examiner.

Speedwell marking and report- why does this contain candidate names- should be candidate number only.

Check marking- not double marking- why, how robust is that?

Had a great experience on my first visit to Leeds and I really look forward to returning.

Thanks

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	School of Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine and Health
Address for communication:	Level 6 Worsley Building University of Leeds LS2 9JT
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 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

N/A

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:

The issue of double blind marking has been given full consideration by the School in previous discussions and reflections. The actual process used, as outlined in full below, is fully compliant with University of Leeds requirements, has been previously inspected and approved by the GDC and is acceptable to our other External Examiners. We are not proposing a change.

The School of Dentistry check marks all written assessment scripts as described and approved by the University of Leeds within the Code of Practice on Assessment:

“4.5a Definitions

Double marking means that in addition to the first marker, another member of staff independently marks your work. Check marking means that in addition to the first marker, another member of staff samples or audits the marking across the module to review overall marking standards and consistency between individual markers”.

The exception to this approach is the Final Year Project, which does use blind double marking, in line with the requirements of the University of Leeds for all such projects in all programmes.

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:

We are glad that that you were provided with the information and resources required in your first year as an external examiner at Leeds.

A mentor is usually only provided when a colleague is acting as an external examiner for the first time but this can be arranged if you would wish.

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 reassured that you feel that the standards of the programme are appropriate and comparable with similar programmes at other institutions.

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 confirming that a wide range of intended learning outcomes are assessed, as required by the GDC. The School is in the process of rationalising assessment which involves reviewing the ILOs for each module; the current state of blueprinting will be supplied for your information at your next visit.

We are pleased that you determined that the academic standards demonstrated by our students were similar to those in other dental schools, but disappointed that you did not see any highly performing students in the examinations you observed, particularly as this was not the experience of your fellow external examiners.

Whilst external examiners are not involved in the marking process, our internal examiners are aware that they are able to approach external examiners for advice. We are pleased that you felt this system worked appropriately, when specifically invited to adjudicate between internal 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:

We are pleased to hear that you found the progression and awards process was managed appropriately.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your detailed response and ideas for consideration. We are aware that it is not always easy to fully appreciate the detailed workings of an established process when observing it for the first time and we will endeavour to provide you with more information in advance of, and answer questions during, your next visit.

You noted that examiners had not received case reports two weeks before the examination. This applied to the work of a very small number of candidates and related to the fact that these candidates had been given extensions due to unavoidable and extenuating circumstances. The examiners were aware of this and had put time aside to review these cases in advance of the examination. In all other cases the reports were submitted and made available to the examiners in paper form and electronically, well in advance of the examination.

We note your comments about examiner conduct during the examinations, specifically with regard to questioning after the 'buzzer' and appropriate use of the white and blue mark sheets. We will share these with our examiners. We will also raise awareness in respect of your comments around examiners providing the correct answer when students have faltered and note the need for tissues to be placed at each station.

We will also consider your helpful suggestions regarding the format of the posters.

We will be adding a box for examiner signatures (internal and external) on the blue mark sheet and agree that both white and blue sheets should be used for feedback, to avoid the need for duplication.

All students presented a patient for examination either on the day of, or in the week before, the examination. Students are aware that they are expected to present one of their three cases to demonstrate work they have done. We think it is important to continue to see patients under these controlled conditions and plan to continue with this approach for the immediate future. Acknowledging the fact that it is difficult to anticipate all eventualities, we will never the less endeavour to make the protocol for managing a patient who does not attend clearer, the goal is and must always be to ensure equitability of approach.

Your comment about limiting the number of words that students write on the posters is well taken and the School will endeavour to introduce this.

You report that the process of observation by external examiners could be changed such that external examiners see a greater number of examiner pairs via moving the external examiners around more. We agree that there is a balance to be met between reviewing all examiner pairings versus the logistical challenge of moving external examiners around, with the potential impact on students and internal examiners. To meet this challenge, the School made the decision to appoint three external examiners for year 5, working as a team to ensure that all examiner pairings are observed at least once, as opposed to all teams being observed by all external examiners.

We are pleased that you felt that there was good consistency between examiner pairs and that sensible use of professional judgement was used. We are also glad that you felt that the time spent at the start of the session to calibrate examiners was valuable.

We note your comments about examiners not always examining their own area of specialty. This examination is pitched at the level of a safe beginner, but we will continue to work with our external examiners to ensure that the examinable rubric is as clear as possible, so that all assessors are clear about expected standards.

'Speedwell' reports are produced with student names appended. These will no longer be made available to protect anonymity.

Thank you for your comment about timing of the first three cases. We will reiterate to examiners that it is the responsibility of examining teams to share the available time equally, using a clock.

Thank you once again for your feedback and suggestions. We look forward to working with you over the next few years to further develop and strengthen our assessment processes in Year 5 of the Dental Surgery programme.