

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18    QAT Received 10/09/2018

**Part A: General Information**

**Subject area and awards being examined**

*Title and Name of Examiner:*

*Faculty / School of:*

Faculty of Medicine and Health, School of Dentistry

*Subject(s):*

*Programme(s) / Module(s):*

Third year (DSUR3014, 3015, 3019, 3210, 3240, 3250 including the OSCE assessment)  
Various assessments at Resit period in August 2018.

*Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):*

MChD/BChD, 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*  
During the OSCE I noted many areas of good practice. The OSCE was obviously well organised and to a tried and tested formula.

The involvement and integration of all staff including academic, nursing and administrative staff was excellent.

The provision of feedback to and from students on the day was another example of good practice, as was the idea of using "never incident" notification cards.

The calibration of staff between stations on the day was another good idea, as was having a paper back-up in case of issues with the IT system. The statistical analysis was also carried out to a very high standard

The crown examination criteria included student self-assessment and reflection which is an example of good practice and enabled the assessment of student insight into the students' technical skills

The assignment in PPD3 were of a generally high standard and the marking rubrics were excellent.

The written examinations assessed in June along with the resit examinations in August were of an appropriate style and level. The examination process was carried out with a high degree of academic rigour and where issues arose (e.g. the statistics examination marking) these were dealt with in an appropriate and fair manner.

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

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

As this is my first year as external examiner this is difficult to report

**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*

The students were kept waiting for up to 30minutes before the start of the OSCE. I was waiting on the clinic for the students and the examination area appeared well organised. This wait was found to be unacceptable by the students and I do agree with them, thus the reason for this needs investigated so that it does not happen again.

Students could see and hear what was being examined on other stations whilst they were at a rest station. This was particularly marked on the second day. This does need looking into as moving the rest stations may be a simple solution.

The “model” answers provided for the SSAQ’s are actually **Guideline** answers and should be described as such. The general rubric descriptors for the SSAQ’s describing the level for each mark needs urgent attention as this did produce an anomaly in the resit. However, I understand this is already in hand

**For Examiners in the first year of appointment**

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

**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

*Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.*

When visiting in August I was allowed access to the VLE and on the basis of this and discussions with staff I am content that the programme structure and design is appropriate and that there is constructive alignment between the programme of teaching and the assessments

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)*

This topic is always difficult within a “professional” course however the widespread practice of teaching evidence based dentistry ensures that the understanding of the influence of research is an integral component. The statistics element is naturally one clear interface with research

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?	Y
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*Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:*

Both the OSCE and the crown preparation components demonstrate a good understanding of learning and assessment within a clinical environment. The level of cooperation between clinical, administrative and academic staff during the OSCE infers that this is a regular occurrence and this too infers a good understanding.

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
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*Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:*

Like all accredited Dental Schools Leeds provides a curriculum mapped to GDC learning Outcomes and meets the requirements of the GDC's "Preparing for Practice" (2015) document.

## Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
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*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.*

The assessment methods are appropriate for the ILOs. The clinical components are assessed by standard methods such as OSCEs and clinical practical examinations and student knowledge by SSAQs and MCQs

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
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19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
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*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:*

The general standard of achievement is good and is comparable to other Dental Schools.

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

The EMQs are generally NOT EMQs, they appear to be MCQs with the answer options placed within an EMQ framework. As EMQs are notoriously difficult to construct in dentistry I wonder if it wouldn't be simpler to acknowledge this and ask the same questions in an MCQ format.

The MCQ's themselves are provided with one best answer and four distractors. This makes it difficult and time consuming for staff to compile new questions. Furthermore the education literature suggests that the addition of a 4<sup>th</sup> distractor has limited extra value over 3 distractors. I would therefore recommend looking at the format and perhaps changing to a 3 distractor format. This may also help reduce the number of negatively phrased questions as I feel this has arisen as it is easier to think of 4 positive distractors and one best negative answer than it is to think of four incorrect but plausible answers.

The way the data is collated from all the previous examinations should allow you to see if any of the distractors are never used and thus amend your current question bank accordingly. My hope would be that by simplifying the process the staff would then be able to provide new questions more easily.

## 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
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21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
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22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
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23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
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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><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>The School made me feel very welcome which is important when you are acting as external in your first year. The administration processes were well organised and information was always available. The time between receiving examination papers to approve and the date of return was occasionally very tight, the deadlines did not allow for leave, for example.</p>		

#### Other comments

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

As this was my first year at Leeds I obviously needed to familiarise myself with both the course and the assessment programme. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were particularly helpful in this regard.

The programme and assessments overall are generally well organised and of a high standard. During the resits it became obvious that the first year programme, like all programmes run for the first time, needed to be in and some modifications to the requirements to prepare for clinical practice for example, need adjustment. However, the School's commitment to its students is extremely fair. The Special Circumstances Board provides students with support as well as evaluating their fitness to partake in the assessment. Unfortunately, the timing of the sitting of the Board occasionally leaves a long delay between the providing of evidence and the evaluation of that evidence. This can mean that, should supplementary evidence be required, the ideal time for providing this has past.

I was particularly impressed by the fact that I could recommend academic mentorship for the "just passing" student at the resits as this will not only help the student but will also contribute towards our duty as dentists to protect patients.

My overall impression is that the OSCE is a well organised, fair examination and that the students are of a good standard. I feel it is tried and tested, but could be helped by a refresh, mainly looking at the overall aims and timings.

During the OSCE students wore name badges. Whilst I am aware that most of the staff know most of the students I still feel this examination should be as anonymous as possible. Identifying the student's by their clinic code may resolve this issue. I am concerned that students with a reputation, not known by sight by all the examiners may suffer adversely, based on their reputation if this is not done.

There are a number of recommendations which I think may improve the efficiency of the OSCE.

I have made recommendations earlier about the EMQ's MCQ's and the rubric for the SSAQ's

As I have made a number of recommendations for improvement I would like ensure that this is seen in a balanced light. The programme and assessments demonstrate complete academic rigour and are certainly fit for purpose. My thoughts and recommendations are made to try and help that process by lessening the obviously high burden on the staff whilst maintaining the high standard currently demonstrated.

**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)***Title and Name of Examiner:**Subject(s):**Programme(s) / Module(s):*

MChD Third year (DSUR3014, 3015, 3019, 3210, 3240, 3250 including the OSCE assessment) Including resit period in August 2018.

*Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):*

MChD/BChD, BSc

*Title and Name of Responder:**Position\*:*

Head of School (Dean of the School of Dentistry)

*Faculty / School of:*

Faculty of Medicine and Health, School of Dentistry

*Address for communication:*

Level 6 Worsley Building, Clarendon Way, University of Leeds, LS2 9LU

*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](mailto: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**

Thank you for your comments regarding areas of innovation and good practice in year 3. We are reassured that you found the written examinations were of an appropriate style and level and involved academic rigour and scrutiny.

We are pleased that you found good practice and organisation in relation to the Clinical Practice 3 OSCE. It is good to hear that you found that the involvement and integration of staff from within the School in the examination was excellent. Our mechanisms for providing feedback are intended to offer students detailed and timely feedback on the examination performance and we are pleased that you felt this to be an example of good practice. We are reassured that you found our systems for the OSCE to be well thought through, including calibration of staff between stations and our back-up systems. Likewise, your comment on the high standard of statistical analysis for the assessment is welcome.

We were pleased to note that you felt that the use self-reflection by students in regards to their 'crowns test' was a good form of assessment of both their work and their insight into their own skills. Likewise, we are pleased that you found that the marking rubrics used as part of the PPD3 module were excellent and that student performance was of a high standard.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

We understand that it is not possible to report on changes during the first year as External Examiner.

**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:*

Thank you for your valuable observations regarding the delay in the start of the CP3 OSCE examination. This was unfortunate and due, in part, to our highly efficient leader of the Clinical Practice 3 Module being unavailable, due to unforeseeable circumstances. A delay arose which related to a temporary malfunction in the 'Practique' software

used to score the OSCE and the unforeseen staffing shortage required one colleague to try to be in two places at once, as a result. An apology was made to the students. Such a situation has not arisen previously and as you state elsewhere, we had the back-up option of marking the examination by paper – however, we were able to resolve the software issue and commence the examination. The examiner's break was shortened to ensure that the following cycle was not delayed. It is entirely understandable that the students may have experienced some anxiety during this period and we will endeavour to minimise the risk of this occurring again and, if there is any delay, communicate clearly to reassure the students.

We are aware that there is some potential for students to overhear what occurs in the adjacent units whilst they are at a rest station. We have explored alternative arrangements of OSCE circuits in the clinical areas over many years and there are some potential solutions. There is limited potential to change the arrangement of stations within each circuit as the rest stations would end up similarly located adjacent to an active station. The rest stations could be moved to an area off clinic – although this would mean further staff requirement (direction of traffic), a potentially isolated area to move students between active stations and would result in reduced preparation time. An alternative might be to use some form of over or in-ear sound muffling device to reduce the risk of students overhearing any comments made in other stations without interruption of their concentration and we will consider the matter again.

We agree that guideline answers are not intended as a 'model' for marking and examiners have been reminded of this. Our examiners are clearly advised that the short description of the borderline passing answer is the standard expected, as you note.

#### **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 pleased that you received the External Examiner's Handbook and were provided with a mentor. You indicate that you did not receive previous External Examiners' reports for which we apologise. If you wish to see them, this can of course be arranged.

### **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 note that you found the programme structure and design appropriate, that it allows the intended learning outcomes to be met and that you found constructive alignment between the teaching and assessment. We are pleased that you found that the aims and outcomes are commensurate with the level of the award and comparable with similar programmes.

### **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:*

It is good to know that you find that assessment methods are appropriate for the learning outcomes. Similarly, we are happy to have your acknowledgement that the design and structure is at an appropriate level and allows the students opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and outcomes of the programme.

Your comments regarding the difficulties of using Extended Matching Questions are noted and we will continue to review them. Similarly, we thank you for your comments in relation to the difficulties developing Multiple Choice Questions with four distractors; the School Assessment and Standards Board will consider this, which would imply the need for a programme-level change to be agreed by the Faculty Taught Student Education Committee and the University of Leeds' Taught Student Education Board.

### **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 your comments on the progression and awards process. We are glad to have provided you with the appropriate amount of information and opportunity to evaluate this process and that you found all areas satisfactory. We appreciate your detailed review of and input in this process and are very pleased that you felt welcomed by the School. We are sorry that there was a short turnaround time for approval of the papers and we will try to ensure that they are received in good time for you to have the opportunity to review them in future.

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

Thank you for your detailed review. You have offered some very useful comments and narrative for the assessment process. We are pleased that you found the programme and assessments overall to be well-organised, of a high standard and fair. We will continue our annual review process for changes made to the programme, such as the newly conjoined first year and strive to develop them such that they are as streamlined as possible.

We were pleased that you found the Special Circumstances process is supportive of students, including an assessment of their fitness to sit the examinations in question and take on board your comments regarding the tight timelines often involved in considering special circumstances.

We are keen to support students whom, whilst performing at the expected level in resit assessments, may benefit from further mentoring and support. As such we are delighted to hear that you were impressed by the process for offering further academic mentorship for students and the potential benefits of this.

We note your comments regarding anonymity of students in the OSCE examination. Whilst it is true that anonymity is desirable, the pool of staff examining are very likely to recognise and have experience of the students they will examine (due to the fact that the staff involved are mostly clinical, academics). The use of the candidate name is an important and reliable check to ensure that the correct candidate is being examined. In addition, the statistical analysis of the examination data is careful to check for and identify any anomaly in marking.

We thank you for your recommendations for improving the efficiency and validity of the OSCE and will consider them carefully.

Your insight into the assessment processes is valuable. We appreciate your desire for any recommendations to be seen in a balanced manner towards what you find to be an academically rigorous programme in terms of teaching and assessment. You correctly note that the assessment burden upon staff (and in turn students) is high and we are seeking to rationalise assessment whilst maintaining the expected high standard.