

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 04/07/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

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

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

The Final Year project that this course incorporates is extremely valuable and shows a good point of innovation within the programme: it enhances the students to develop their critical thinking and research skills in a very successful manner.

The examination process was transparent and fair, and any issues or questions that arose during my stay were answered promptly and in a clear manner, showing good practice at all times.

The programme continues to compare favourably to other institutions in the country.

Enhancements made from the previous year

All the questions in the written papers used model answers with the criteria on what to expect from a "safe pass" which had been previously discussed taking on board last year's external examiners comments.

The internal examiners had more time than previous years to calibrate their answers for the unseen cases which was important to conduct a fair examination process.

The Final Year Projects continue to be of excellent research quality reflecting the hard work not only of the students but of the tutors who also deserve recognition. As external I would continue to encourage your students to present their work at national and international conferences.

Matters for Urgent Attention

No matters needing urgent attention were identified

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	N/A
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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 an 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 an External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

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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 overall programme structure is coherent and appropriate to the level of study, allowing the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met. The programme not only compares favourably to other institutions but it incorporates a master adding that extra value to the degree.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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There is a strong component of research on this programme which is reflected in the final year project

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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Yes. The clinical practice component of this course is assessed through unseen cases and the presentation of the students' clinical cases via a poster's presentation followed by a structured oral examination. I had the opportunity to observe both examinations and I am happy to confirm that they were always conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Both examiners marked independently and reached an agreed final mark afterwards showing good practice. I would like to take the opportunity to praise your internal examiners which had taken the time to prepare relevant and adequate questions on each candidate, allowing the students to present and reflect on their achievements during the course. This also gave the opportunity to the examiners to use a varied range of marks depending on each participant performance which was fair at all times.

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
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The programme meets the standards recommended by the General Dental Council.

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Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<i>Assessment methods were appropriate for the students on this course.</i>		
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>The students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievements through the structured oral examinations, written examinations and poster presentations. I had the chance to observe some students who showed outstanding patient manner and great communication skills and this was reflected in their final results.</i>		
<i>Proper feedback was given to the students at all times.</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
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
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>		

I had access to all the material and received appropriate programme documentation at all times.

With regards to **receiving the drafts of examinations for comments**, I would kindly suggest to give the external examiners perhaps a little bit more time as this year has been particularly a tight turnaround, making it sometimes challenging. I do, however, understand the pressures on everybody and the hard work your staff carry out trying to arrange this, so this is just a minor comment.

With regards to the **written examinations**, unfortunately we are still seeing an examiner marking directly on the paper, not reflecting good practice. Having discussed this with my fellow externals, we would like to suggest the written paper gets photocopied so the examiner does not mark directly on the exam, but the photocopy. This will avoid distraction and possible marking bias for the second examiner. We understand that this may cause extra work but would be something that may solve the current issue and would like you to take into consideration for future examinations.

In terms of the **unseen cases**, good calibration was carried out amongst internal examiners on each specialty group. This indeed made the process easier for the examiners and fairer on the candidates. I had the chance to observe a varied number of candidates and I did agree on each result given. Of note, the calibration was done on each specialty only, having given more time, it may be perhaps useful to also calibrate the examiners on both questions which may help the internals to come up with their final marks.

I was able to attend the Progression Awards Board meeting. All the cases from the School Special Circumstances meeting were well considered, discussed and treated fairly.

Other comments

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

This is my third year as external examiner for this course and I would like to congratulate all the team for conducting a fair and clear process at all times, with especial mention to all the administrative staff and nurses as well as the NHS clinicians who participate in the process, for yet another year of good work.

Finally, I would like to also thank all the team for the hospitality received during my stay.

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

Faculty of Medicine and Health / School of Dentistry

Worsley Building, Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LU

*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 glad that you feel that the Final Year Project is innovative and recognise its value within the programme. As you are aware this is the second graduating year of the MChD programme and we are pleased by the quality of final year research projects that our students have produced. We will continue to encourage our students to present their work at national and international conferences.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Following comments from our external examiners last year we ensured that the written papers were standard set by describing the performance expected of a passing candidate and are glad that you have been able to see the improvement made. We constantly strive to improve the robustness of our examination process and we are pleased that measures taken to further improve calibration in the Unseen Cases have your support.

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 reassured to hear that you found that our clinical examinations were always conducted in a fair and transparent manner. We are grateful for the acknowledgement of the work carried out by our internal examiners to review presented cases in advance of the examination and prepare focussed questions to allow our students opportunity to fully demonstrate their achievement whilst reflecting on and defending their work.

Thank you for confirming that our programme meets the standards recommended by the General Dental Council and continues to compare favourably to other institutions in the country.

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:

We are reassured to hear that you found the assessment methods appropriate and that our students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievements through the range of examinations you were able to scrutinise. We are encouraged to hear that you observed our students demonstrating outstanding patient manner and great communication skills and that the examination results reflected this.

We are pleased to hear that you felt that proper feedback was provided to our students at all times.

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 material to evaluate this process. We are sorry that there was a short turnaround time for approval of the papers and we will try hard to ensure that they are received with good time for you to have the opportunity to review them in the future.

We note your comments regarding examiners writing directly on the examination paper and thank you for your suggestion of a possible solution. This will be explored further by our Assessment and Standards Board.

We made a conscious decision to improve the calibration of the unseen cases this year. This involved meetings within specialty groups at the final draft stage of the case development and then time set aside for calibration within examiner groups at the start of the session. We are glad to hear that you felt that this approach reaped benefits and note your suggestion to increase the time allocated to allow all examiners to look at both questions in the same amount of detail.

Thank you for attending the Progression and Awards Board and Special Circumstances Committee and for your contribution to these important meetings. We endeavour to consider all cases very carefully and are reassured to hear that you found this to be the case.

Other comments

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

We appreciate your detailed review of and input into our Year 5 examinations and are very pleased that you felt welcomed by the School. We appreciate your acknowledgement of the work of our administrative and NHS staff who are invaluable in their contribution to these important examinations. Thank you for your ongoing support as an external examiner.