

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 30/09/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of
Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Healthcare

Subject(s):

Nursing

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BSc Nursing (Mental Health)

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.

The school has clear and effective processes for dealing with plagiarism and extenuating circumstances. Students undertaking nursing courses can experience higher than average claims for extenuating circumstances. Throughout my time as external for this course I have been impressed by the efficiency of these processes alongside the clarity and consistency they offer students.

As highlighted in previous reports, the innovation evident in the assessments, particularly where students are required to design an App is excellent. It is evident students are challenged whilst also being able to pursue their own areas of interest. The optional modules which are also highly relevant for mental health nursing are further examples of good practice. I would encourage the team to consider how they can maintain these aspects as the course is designed in line with the new NMC (2018) standards for education.

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 wider team has made changes to the medicines assessment to address quality issues from previous years and respond to student feedback.

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

None

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
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y
7.	Have you acted as an 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

The programme continues to provide a high-quality learning experience. It is evident that the programme team review and respond to student evaluation through regular amendments and strive to enhance the student experience on the course as a result. During the period of my appointment, all theory based assessments have moved to online submission, presentations are also recorded to facilitate effective moderation and external examining. Assessment guidance for a number of modules has been altered following student feedback and performance in order to seek improvements. I have been consulted on some of these amendments as external examiner. A key development which was in line with previous recommendations I have made was the change to the structure of final year dissertations. Students now undertake an extended literature as opposed to an in depth research critique. This year's submissions highlight the opportunity for students achieving higher grades to really shine and those who were graded at the lower end of the spectrum achieving a higher level of synthesis than with the previous option.

It is evident that the nursing team at the School of Healthcare are consistently seeking to build on the high standard of their teaching and learning provision.

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.

Aims and learning outcomes appear commensurate with the level of ward. Evidence of incremental progression in learning outcomes is demonstrated between Year 1, 2 and 3 to develop a cohesive and comprehensive programme.

<p>Learning Outcomes are mapped onto the NMC pre-registration standards to demonstrate on a modular level where the required knowledge and skills for the profession are developed. There appears to be a good balance between learning aimed at a broad foundation of nursing practice shared by all those studying on the programme and specialist modules designed specifically for mental health nursing students. Curriculum planning is underway for a new course based on the new NMC standards and it would be important to ensure that this balance is maintained in the future.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<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>Throughout the written and verbal assessments students are required to demonstrate that they can apply relevant research to their practice as a mental health nurse. This involves drawing on the research to justify the approach that they have taken, to analyse an aspect of work with an individual experiencing mental health problems e.g risk assessment or to use the research to define a health need. Students are consistently able to demonstrate their ability to access a wide range of literature sources and underpin their arguments with these.</p> <p>The course includes a 10,000 literature review based dissertation, this requires engagement with contemporary healthcare research and students to be able to demonstrate knowledge of different research techniques and approaches.</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:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p> <p>The structure of the practice based assessment ensures all Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) practice requirements are met. They provide students with an opportunity to reflect and capture their learning through the encounters that they have within the healthcare setting. These are able to be applied and assessed against the NMC standards. The sample of practice assessments viewed were of a good standard and included some excellent feedback from practice based assessors</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p> <p>The programme content and outcomes are mapped against the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Using a range of learning experiences, assessments in addition to the practice components of the course, students undertaking this programme appear well prepared for registration as a mental health nurse</p>		

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 range of assessment approaches adopted is a strength of the programme. Assignment guidelines are well structured and the support available to students for academic staff are clearly identified.

Markers on the mental health field provide a fairly consistent standard of feedback that is detailed, individualised and identifies strengths and weaknesses of the submitted work. This is provided across the bands.

Moderating processes continue to be rigorous and responsive.

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 / N

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:

Submissions that I have viewed, even at the lower end of the grade bracket have consistently shown a high standard of referencing accuracy and incorporation of credible literature sources to support their discussion. This suggests good quality of support for the students in the development of their core academic skills. On the whole the range of grades achieved would suggest an excellent quality of teaching. Assessment strategy is appropriate for the intended learning outcomes. It also enabled some students to really stretch themselves, I reviewed some samples that achieved 80% plus that were outstanding. The elements within the assessments that enable students to choose their focus really help facilitate this.

Weaknesses are noted in terms of structure and focus of written assignments. Students who achieved less well struggled more with maintaining attention on the topic under discussion and developing arguments beyond description alongside consistently providing evidence to support discussion.

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

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?	N
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>A reminder of the grade boundaries i.e the numerical cut off points for each classification would have been helpful. Either at the start of the award board or being signposted to where these were available prior to the board.</p> <p>As highlighted in the award board feedback from the markers on the students work is specific, individualised and includes clear indications of how students across all the grade boundaries can improve their work.</p> <p>The administrative arrangements are well organised. The assessment administrative staff are always helpful and efficient.</p>		

Other comments

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

It has been a pleasure to be an external at the School of Healthcare. I have been well supported by the administrative staff and there has been a good induction and clear processes to follow. The mental health and wider nursing team are committed to providing a relevant, innovative and high quality learning experience to enable graduates from the School to provide excellent mental health nursing care. I wish the team well with the new curriculum.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

QAT received 15/02/2019

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Mental Health

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BSc (hons) Nursing (Mental Health) Programme

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position:*

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

Healthcare

Address for communication:

Baines Wing
University of Leeds
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 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 positive comments relating to initiatives within the programme, particularly those relating to assessment. The assignment requiring students to produce a plan for a mobile App produces some outstanding and thoughtful work. It is indeed a core aim of the programme team that students think creatively and are stimulated to pursue areas of own interest. The results seen with this and other modules with topic choices are very promising with students generally producing work of a high academic standard. A further optional module addressing the dementia experience of families will be available within the next academic session.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The mental health team, has striven to support students with medicines assessments with pleasing results attained. This will be further addressed over the coming academic year with a particular focus upon developing the resources and examples available within SN@P.

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:

It is reassuring to note that there are no matters at present requiring urgent attention.

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:

It is pleasing to note the recognition of the high-quality learning experience provided to students. Feedback to students in particular has been an area of key focus for the mental health team assisting students in developing their academic skills. This has been evidenced by the impressive range of classifications attained with a high proportion gaining a 1st or 2:1 award.

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:

There is a strong approach within the mental health programme of attaining learning which reflects the 5 dimensions of health. The foundation established in the first year is subsequently built upon steering students towards core theoretical and Practice elements of mental health practice. The current planning for the new curriculum utilises this ethos and aims at developing knowledgeable, reflective practitioners who are appropriately skilled and able to demonstrate leadership skills and critical application of evidence.

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:

The range of assessment approaches is indeed important with opportunities promoted for students to excel. There have been some outstanding assignments submitted with a number of publishable quality. The academic guidance is carefully geared towards students' developing needs. The critical application of evidence based material is a specific component stressed to students.

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:

The mental health team aims to continue providing quality feedback to students regarding their assignment work. This includes clear indications as to how students can improve their work. The grade boundaries for classifications is located in the Code of Practice on Assessment and we will draw this to the attention of your successor.

Other comments

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

It has been a pleasure for the mental health team to work with an external examiner with your experience and supportive input. The team is particularly grateful that you have been able to comment on assessed work in a timely manner with some extremely helpful and intuitive feedback provided. On behalf of the mental health team, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our very heartfelt thanks for the professionalism, expertise and support which you have offered to us in your role as external examiner over the past few years. The team very much hopes that it will be possible to find opportunities for ongoing collaboration over the progression of planning for the new curriculum.