

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 13/09/2018

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 Healthcare

Subject(s):

Pharmacy Practice Programme and Pharmacist Prescribing

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Compulsory modules for the Pharmacy Practice Programme:
 HECS5139M Personal and professional development within healthcare
 HECS5242M Pharmaceutical care: core conditions
 HECS5243M Pharmaceutical care: specialist conditions
 HECS5141M Service development within healthcare
 IOFN5004M Research methods
 HECS5152M Dissertation Module

[Optional modules for the Pharmacy Practice Programme are provided below - but I don't think I have reviewed any of these during 17-18]

HECS5168M Ethics in contemporary health and social care
 DISC5012M Professional work-based learning
 HECS5008M Accrediting learning from study days
 HECS 5235M Clinical examination
 HECS 5291M Performance Management and Commissioning
 HECS5145M Programme design and delivery for supervisors of trainees in the clinical setting
 HECS5122M Assessment, appraisal and evaluation for supervisors of preregistration pharmacy training
 HECS5237M Introduction to qualitative research methods

Pharmacist Prescribing Programme

HECS 5146M Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Pharmacists

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

The Pharmacy Practice Programme leads to postgraduate diploma (and certificate) and masters awards.
 The Pharmacist Prescribing Programme leads to a prescribing qualification (postgraduate).

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

Points of innovation and/or good practice

I consider 'Leeds for Life' to be an innovative concept.
 Moreover, having access to the virtual learning environment (VLE) facilitates transparency - I can see resources, announcements, and assessments for the whole cohort of students. Other higher education institutes will only provide the external examiner with a small sample of students' work and a few resources, of their choosing.
 In all the work I have reviewed, the level of feedback provided to the students is commendable and exceeds that of other higher education institutions; it is constructive and comprehensive and importantly, students can see where and why marks were deducted.

Enhancements made from the previous year

This is my first year as External Examiner; the material and assessments I have reviewed are reflective of key issues in practice. For example, deliberate errors in the Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) address pertinent patient safety issues, including reference to announcements made by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in the past year.
 Feedback to enhance of OSCE stations that I provided shortly after starting the position was largely addressed, with changes implemented throughout the 2017-18 academic year.

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 are none. Another accreditation cycle of the Prescribing Programme will occur in 2020, therefore I agree with the action already taken by _____ in response to the accreditor's request about more formalised standard setting for the OSCEs. Once the statistician has provided advice, changes to the OSCEs should be implemented as soon as possible.

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?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a 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?	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

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

N/A – first year of my appointment

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.

Programme structure and design:

Well-structured and organised; comparable to similar postgraduate pharmacy courses offered by other higher education institutions. The programme is academically stimulating and challenging. From the announcements and resources on the VLE, and discussions with academic staff, it is evident that the modules are well organised and there is regular and timely communication with students.

Some of the coursework assessments are large (such as the portfolios), therefore resulting in the module team having a very intense period of marking at certain times of the year.

Programme aims and intended learning outcomes:

The intended learning outcomes are realistic, appropriate for the level of the award, and map to the assessments. Additionally, the Prescribing Programme's aims and learning outcomes align with the accrediting body (General Pharmaceutical Council) requirements.

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)

Yes, it is clear. Within the Pharmacy Practice Programme and Prescribing Programme emphasis is placed on evidence-based healthcare. Students are expected to refer to local and national clinical guidelines and gold-standard systematic reviews (such as those provided by the Cochrane Library) and understand the associated statistical terminology used in the clinical literature.

Assessments align with recommendations in medical educational literature.

In terms of students undertaking research or becoming more familiar with the concept, within the Pharmacy Practice Programme there is a research module (and an optional one on qualitative research methods) and one relating to dissertations.

In module team as a whole have expertise of conducting and publishing research, but also of working in practice (real world evidence and experience).

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:
 Within the Pharmacy Practice Programme, some of the modules specifically relate to research methodology or a dissertation, which would foster transferrable skills and could potentially be a valuable for students considering undertaking doctoral work. However, the Programme (and particularly the Prescribing Programme) is not aimed at being a foundational course leading on to 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:

The Pharmacy Practice Programme (including the Prescribing Programme) provides an excellent variety of learning opportunities such as taught workshops and lectures, the VLE, work-based learning and one-to-one support. Indeed, work-based learning is a common and recommended approach used within healthcare disciplines, among others. Module content is relevant for practice and contemporary.

From the medical literature, OSCEs are considered to be one of the best ways to assess clinical competence and these are used within the Pharmacy Practice programme (including the Prescribing Programme). As previously mentioned, deliberate errors in the OSCEs reflect pertinent patient safety issues, including announcements made by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in the past year. Other assignments centre on critical analysis, reflection, and effective communication. These are typical of the types of assessments done within healthcare courses (at undergraduate and postgraduate level), given the importance of having such skills in practice. The feedback (formative and summative) provided on submitted assignments or draft work is constructive and comprehensive.

Much of the Prescribing Programme is largely dictated by the accrediting body (the General Pharmaceutical Council) and currently includes the involvement of designated medical practitioners in students' learning and assessment.

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

The Prescribing Programme is well-established and has been accredited from the outset, with the next accreditation event happening in 2020. The last accreditation report (2016) outlines the conditions and recommendations; I agree with the action already taken by _____ in response to the request for more stations and formalised standard setting within the objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs). Once the advice from the statistician has been obtained, hopefully changes can be implemented as soon as possible.

The Prescribing Programme may need to further adapt to meet the new standards (the consultation process for these standards ended in June 2018) and the module team are aware of this.

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.

As previously stated, the ILOs map to the assessments. The chosen assessment types (such as OSCEs, reflective accounts, portfolios, presentations) are commonly employed in healthcare courses, including being used within the pharmacy profession.

With regard to the work I have reviewed, the marking was fair and accurate with clear annotated comments and feedback. Furthermore, the level of internal moderation is appropriate and includes double marking. On occasions where students were provided with extensive guidance (examples of good and bad answers and a review of draft material), I might have expected their grades to be better than they were. The OSCE mean marks were high, but this may change in the future when new scoring methodology is employed.

The module team have expertise in practice which helps ensure authenticity and that key skills and competencies are being fostered and assessed. Moreover, Designated Medical Practitioners (DMPs) in the Prescribing Programme receive clear guidance about their role.

Some minor comments and suggestions are provided below:

- It would be useful if students' oral presentations and OSCEs could be audio-visually recorded for quality assurance purposes, but I appreciate financial constraints may prevent this from happening
- Where many assessors are required (for example, in the oral presentations), it is important to have guidance or a standard operating procedure to ensure consistency of approach
- In addition to the M level marking guide, the MSc dissertations (HECS5152) could have weightings for each section (i.e. introduction, methodology, results, discussion/conclusion and references) and further guidance as to what constitutes an automatic fail, if relevant (for example, if a student uses inappropriate methodology or data analysis, but all other aspects of their dissertation were excellent)

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

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 standard demonstrated by the students was comparable to that seen at other higher education institutions. There was a range of performance (top, middle and bottom grades). While some work was indeed excellent, weaknesses include lack of reflection, lack of critical ability and application of knowledge, and incorrect (or inadequate) referencing style. From my experience, these issues are not unique to the University of Leeds, or to postgraduate students.

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

In all the work I have reviewed, the level of feedback provided to the students is commendable; it is constructive and comprehensive and importantly, students can see where and why marks were deducted.

There is evidence that where students have performed poorly in a particular aspect of an assessment, this has been identified by the module team and used to inform future teaching.

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?	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? <i>*I attended an exam board meeting on 19th June 2018</i>	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? <i>*I do not recall SSC decisions being communicated at the exam board I attended.</i>	N/A*

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

The exam board process and review of samples of student work is different to that of my own institution. We have one annual board with the external examiner reviewing samples of student work over a one or two-day period just prior to the exam board. It is easy to get a sense of academic performance and final qualifications of the whole cohort with only one exam board, however it offers less flexibility to students.

The only other comment I have is in relation to signing spreadsheets of student marks prior to exam boards and the purpose of the external examiner signing them, since we cannot easily check that all marks are correct for each student. Again, this is different from my own institution where spreadsheets of student marks are provided to external examiners for reference only.

Other comments

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

The staff who teach on, and co-ordinate, the Pharmacy Practice programme (and Prescribing Programme) have been very helpful and supportive over the past year (and receptive to any feedback I have provided). It was great to meet many of them in person in January and June and I look forward to working with them again next year.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Pharmacy

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Diploma/Masters in Pharmacy Practice
Diploma/Masters in Pharmacy Practice with Prescribing
Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Pharmacists

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

PGDip/MSc Pharmacy Practice

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

School of Healthcare

Address for communication:

The 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 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

Thank you for your very supportive comments.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**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:

We are currently working with colleagues in the Leeds Institute of Medical Education (LIME) to implement an overall improvement in the quality of the OSCEs within all modules (that use OSCE assessment). The pharmacy and LIME team met on 23rd August to undertake an OSCE writing session and met again in November to undertake the standard setting exercise associated with these OSCEs. It is intended that the 'revised' OSCE assessment will be implemented on a pilot basis from Jan 2019 onwards and will be implemented in full from Sept 2019 onwards.

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:

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:

It is noted by the external examiner that the assessment for the non-medical prescribing module is large and leads to an intense period of marking for the module team. The team is currently reviewing the assessment for the module and seeking to rationalise assessment, particularly within the portfolio, as much as possible. We will seek to implement further changes when the module undergoes reaccreditation with the GPhC in Jan 2020.

Additional changes to assessment and teaching may also be required with the publication of the new Prescribing standards in 2019/2020.

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:

Responses to minor comments and suggestions:

- Audio-visual recording: we agree that audio-visual recording would strengthen the transparency and reliability of marking, this is challenging due to a lack of resources in the School for visual recording of OSCEs. The team will seek to raise this at School level committee meetings. The audio files of the OSCEs have been useful in moderating the OSCEs and providing feedback to students.
- Consistency of marking: all assessors are briefed prior to commencing any case based discussion type assessment with students. The team met in October 2018 to undertake a team marking exercise of a case based discussion. This should further enhance consistency between markers.
- M Level marking guide: The dissertation module is a shared module with students from a multitude of disciplines and programmes within the School. We will share this feedback with the module leader.

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:

Your concerns regarding the number of documents requiring your signature are duly noted. The procedures the School follows conform to University requirements and are being reviewed as part of our continual improvement process. Following feedback from your predecessor, the team has consolidated submissions to exam boards to a maximum of 4 times a year in order to limit the number of separate requests for your consideration without impacting on the students' ability to complete their studies.

Other comments

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

Thank you for the positive comments you have provided in relation to programme structure, evidence and research based teaching and marking and feedback for students. We have found your constructive and comprehensive comments on all aspects of our programmes and modules very helpful. We look forward to working with you over the coming year.