

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 13/11/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Education

Subject(s):

Childhood Studies

Programme(s) / Module(s):

EDUC 5861 M Theorizing Children and Youth
EDUC 5862M Research with Children and Young People
EDUC 5865M Children, Young People: Citizenship, Participation and Social Justice
EDUC 5430M Dissertation
EDUC 4866 Child Poverty and Wellbeing
EDUC 5867Children, Families and Personal Relations

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

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 range of assessment methods is exceptional.

The methodological preparation for the dissertation and further research based work at both academic and professional levels.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

This continues to be an excellent degree and I have not seen any major changes in the past 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

None that I can think of although they were not able to run the on-screen, off-screen module

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?	n/a
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 has got better over the 4 years and I think this is reflected in the rise in student numbers. There were issues of personal tutoring in the first year, but students now feed into a well-developed personal tutorial system. There has been a change in the teaching personnel and leadership during the 4 years but this has not hampered the quality of work that students consistently produce. Marking and assessment has been first rate throughout. Dissertations are all seconded marked and in the later years there appear to be less divergence between first and second marks. This is an intellectually challenging degree. Students are expected to engage with theoretical and conceptual debates and themes at the beginning of the course. They undertake a rigorous methodology module and I have noticed a slight improvement in theoretical and methodological underpinnings of their research work later in the degree.

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)?	N/a
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.

This is a balanced and well structure degree providing core and optional modules. The latter are quite varied in substantive content and nicely complement the core modules. Aims and outcomes are clearly stated in the documentation and there is sufficient evidence from the material read that tutors are engaging with students in being able to meet these outcomes.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
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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)

The degree is taught by experts in the field of Childhood Studies. There is a strong commitment to engaging students at all levels with research. Students are very well prepared through the Research with Children and Young People module Seminars, workshops and tutorials provide a thorough grounding in the theory and practice of research. I discussed this issue with students on this course, and students were very positive about the way tutors encourage them to engage with theory and methodology.

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:

Yes, I would expect several students to go on and undertake doctoral work. The theory and methods modules are of a very high quality. I would expect graduates to be at an advantage when going on to doctoral level work.

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

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

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.

Yes, assessment is varied allowing students to meet outcomes in a number of ways.

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
<p><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> Students here are comparable with others undertaking similar degrees at other universities.</p> <p>This was a cohort of 22 students. The marks for the taught modules ranged from 25% into the 80s The former was marked at 25% due to a complete misunderstanding of the brief for the assessment. There were several examples of top class work. For the dissertations the range was 50%-83%. At the bottom end of marking scale there were a number of flaws and writing issues. At the top end we had some outstanding pieces of work: students engaging at a high level with the literature producing theoretically informed analyses. In relation to final marks and grades I was pleased to see several MAs with distinction.</p> <p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

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?	n/a
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?	N/a
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	n/a
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	n/a
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?	Awards board only
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>		

Other comments

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

I have enjoyed my time examining this course. I want to congratulate the team on a consistently excellent course.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Childhood Studies

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Programme leader for MACS, lecturer in childhood studies

Faculty / School of:

ESSL, Education

Address for communication:

School of Education, Hilary Place.

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

I am delighted that _____ believes we have exceptional assessment methods and high quality preparation for the dissertation. We are committed to this module and believe it is highly important in creating good quality research work and supporting doctoral applications too.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The programme has undergone a change of leadership and as such, there haven't been any big changes during this handover. The programme is also running smoothly this academic 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 looking to increase the option module offer with an additional option this next academic year.

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:

I'm pleased _____ has observed improvements over the duration of the year, and over the last four years has spent with us as external examiner. We have valued _____ input and have certainly endeavoured to respond to comments.

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 being attentive to learning aims and outcomes in the development of the programme and at opportunities for review, such as this one.

We have invested considerable effort in the Research with children and young people module and recognise that students value this module as part of their development, some of whom, are intending to undertake doctoral research with us in the School of Education.

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:

Our assessment is designed in conjunction with the learning aims and outcomes and I'm glad that it is deemed to be appropriate. We have, as _____ notes, a good spread of marks from 50s to 80s, showing some of the exceptional students reaching a sophisticated level of understanding of childhood studies.

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:

It appears the process worked well and all information needed was provided.

Other comments

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

We have been delighted to work with _____ over the last four years and have greatly appreciated _____ input to the programme. I'd like to thank _____ for _____ dedication to this role.