

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 18/02/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Education

Subject(s):

*MA Technology, Education and Learning
MA Technology, Education and Learning (Distance)
MA ICT and Education*

Programme(s) / Module(s):

EDUC5001M
EDUC5430M
EDUC5256M
EDUC5258M
EDUC5053M
EDUC5263M

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

MA

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 programmes that I have examined have a number of innovations in terms of teaching / learning, and assessments. The delivery of the programme makes use of the range of opportunities afforded by the Virtual Learning Environment. These include not only the pre-designed reading material and access to e-resources, but also reviews written by students on their key reading material, comments on these reviews by peers, weekly on-line chat sessions, and discussion forums. *As I have highlighted in previous reports, the programmes use innovative assessment methods that are aligned well with the intended learning outcomes and nature of the modules (learning technologies). Presentation of a designed lesson as Prezi presentations and group assignments are commendable. It is clear that the assessments are linked to students' professional contexts and interests. Another innovative practice that I have seen was the use of voice comments to extend the feedback given on some assignments.*

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 programme has been redesigned. The title of the new programme is MA Digital Education. I have had the opportunity to talk to a student based in East Asia who made a number of positive remarks about the programme and their own learning experience on the new programme.

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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N
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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

I have an extremely positive experience as an external examiner on the programme. The discussions that I have had with the programme leader and the course team have been valuable for me to gain an insight into details of the programme. I also receive a sample of assignments well in advance of the examiners' meetings. The programme leader also arranges for me to talk to students on the day I attend the meeting, which is not easy on a distance learning programme. The redesigning of the programme has taken into account some of the good practices from the previous versions of the programme. For example the assessments of modules in the new MA Digital Education Programme will be making use of a number of innovative digital approaches.

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.

The modules in the programme have been designed to meet the overall programme objectives and intended learning outcomes. They align well with the learning objectives and the professional and academic development of the practitioner community that is the target audience of the programme. The programme uses the potentials of the e-learning environment and other technologies extremely well. I have had productive discussions with the programme leader and the members of the programme team. I also had discussions with the students on the course, some on-line. Students are well supported in both delivery / teaching and learning aspects and offering feedback on their assignments. The sample of assignments that I have reviewed showed that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes and they have generally demonstrated very good understanding of the topics they have explored through their assessed work. There were clear links between their assignment topics or themes and their professional backgrounds. Students have received high quality of feedback highlighting both strengths and weaknesses of their work. There is some excellent annotation on the scripts and extended evaluative comments on marksheet by some markers. It was also great to see the use of voice comments in some cases. It would be worth considering to extend these innovative practices across the programme.

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)

The sample of assignments that I have reviewed shows that students have read and reviewed research / evidence-based papers in developing their conceptual thinking underpinning their assignment themes. Most of the assignments do demonstrate the students have carried out an evaluation of a lesson / teaching approach that they have developed. The final assignment is a dissertation which consists of a significant research element which includes students gaining ethics approval for their project. It can be seen that these assignment elements are linked to the research activities of the programme team.

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:

The programme provides a strong foundation for students who are planning to enrol on a PhD programme in the topic area.		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<i>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.</i>		
<p>The sample of assignments that I have evaluated show that the assessment topics / themes are strongly linked to students' professional context, their professional and academic development needs and personal interests. The assignments have clear links to academic literature. The modules use innovative assessment methods relevant to the intended learning outcomes and the nature of the modules. These are also in line with the professional background of the learner on the programme. Students can choose topics that are relevant to their professional background / context.</p>		
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>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>		
<p>The academic standards demonstrated by students are comparable to those of other comparable (M Level) programmes that I am familiar with. Students who have received higher grades demonstrate good evidence of deep and critical engagement with the course and the subject matter. They also show well-developed ability for critical assessment of the literature, and adherence to accurate academic writing conventions. Weaker assignments show limited engagement with core concepts and academic literature.</p>		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		
I have covered most of my observations on this aspect in previous sections of the report. It is good to see that students have been well-supported in their engagement with both learning activities and assessed work.		

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?	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>		

Other comments

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

I appreciate all the work that goes into making my work as an external examiner enjoyable and productive. Attending these meetings is always a good professional development experience for me as well (which I referred to in my HEA Senior Fellowship application, which was successful (and I want to thank the programme team for this!). I also want to thank the administration team for their work. I value the opportunity to meet other external examiners to discuss our views in a shared platform, and finally to offer feedback at the Examination and Assessment Committee Meeting.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Education

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Technology, Education and Learning
MA Technology, Education and Learning (Distance)
MA ICT and Education

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

MA

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

School of Education

Address for communication:

Hillary Place
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

I note your positive feedback on the innovation in assessment methods on this programme and the way that assignments are linked to students' professional contexts. I also note your approval of voice feedback on some assignments.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The MA Technology, Education and Learning has been replaced by the MA Digital Education. I am pleased that you had the opportunity to talk to one of our distance students and that the student is happy with the programme.

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:

I am very glad that your experience as external examiner has been so positive, especially the opportunity to talk with distance students, with the programme leader and with tutors.

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:

Thank you for your positive feedback on the student experience and on the quality of feedback given to students. I note your recommendation to make more use of voice feedback and this will be considered by the programme team.

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:

I note that student assignments are strongly linked to their professional contexts. I am pleased that this is evident as it is one of the aims of the programme. I am also very glad to see that the academic standards are comparable to other MA programmes in this area.

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 positive feedback on the process. Our administrative colleagues work very hard to ensure that the process is smooth and I will pass your comments to them.

Other comments

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

Congratulations on your successful application for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. I am very pleased that our external examiners' meetings have contributed to your professional development in this way.