

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 22/11/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Education

Subject(s):

Education

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Special Educational Needs
PG Cert Provision for Children with Developmental Disorders

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

MA/PG Cert

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

Points of innovation and/or good practice

I would wish to highlight two aspects of the programme. In relation to good practice, I would wish to once again commend the programme team on the high standard of knowledge and expertise available to students in the taught modules e.g. dyslexia, autism. I think this is of enormous benefit to students wishing to study at this level. In particular, I would wish to commend the inclusion of a focus on autism and technological advances (e.g. virtual reality) into one of the modules. This research is considered cutting edge material and allows students to be aware of the very latest advances.

I would also like to highlight once again the quality of the extensive feedback given to students as they progress through the programme. This is of a consistently high quality and allows students to be made aware of ways to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject in addition to improvement of their academic skills. Additionally, I would highlight the effective moderation processes conducted by the teaching team which ensures consistency in grades including the decision to make the marking team for the thesis a small one to ensure maximum consistency in approach.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

I would like to commend the teaching team for the additional research methods sessions made available to students preparing for their thesis. These were supplemental to the general research methods made available to all Masters students but essential for students considering topics related to SEN.

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

It is my opinion that there are no matters requiring urgent attention prior to the programme being offered again.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	N/A
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2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses 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

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

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.

My overall impression of the programme continues to be that it well designed to meet the ILOs. The taught modules build the knowledge and understanding of various key elements of SEN which then supports the students as they complete their thesis focusing on a specific element of SEN which is of interest to them.

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 teaching and learning within the course continues to be clearly informed by the peer-reviewed SEN academic literature; both classic literature of the past and more recent literature which ensures that the students are informed of changes in the understanding of SEN and interventions which might support young people following diagnosis.

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:

N/A

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:

N/A

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:

N/A

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<p><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> <p>The programme design continues to facilitate a clear alignment between ILOs and the assessment methods. The assessment marks achieved by students are comparable with other institutions offering these programmes and courses and I was pleased to note that the full range of marks were awarded by all markers when appropriate. As mentioned previously in this report, I would wish to comment on the consistently high standard of feedback by all the programme team to students. I would also wish to commend the team on the quality and diversity of the questions set at modular level to account for the individual interests of the students and the opportunity for students to receive formative feedback prior to final submission of assessments.</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
<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></p> <p>The design and structure of all assessments is appropriate to the level of the award and permits the students to demonstrate their level of achievement.</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?	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>The Progressions and Awards Boards were conducted in an exemplary manner as always.</p>		

Other comments

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

The External Examiners were informed that the School has made the decision to review its provision of research methods training in light of comments made at previous Boards. I look forward to hearing the outcome of the review and the subsequent actions taken.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Education

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MA Special Educational Needs
PG Cert Provision for Children with Developmental Disorders

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

MA/PG Cert

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Associate Professor – Programme leader

Faculty / School of:

ESSL, Education

Address for communication:

Hillary Place, University of 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

I am pleased that the high level of subject knowledge of the staff delivering these programmes has been recognised. We work hard to ensure that the content of the programme is current, research informed and well aligned with the expertise in the team.

It is also very pleasing to see that our feedback has been commended. We have placed significant attention on this aspect of our provision over the last year in order to achieve a consistently high level of quality across all modules and all markers.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Recognition of our additional research methods training in preparing students for their dissertation is greatly appreciated. This aspect of our provision is still being refined but the improvements we have made over the last year represent a significant and positive change.

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:

No matters 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:

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:

I am pleased that the examiner considers our programmes to be meeting the required standards.

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 have worked hard to refine the assignment questions within each of the core modules. We have reduced the number of options available but have broadened the questions to allow for creative and diverse responses aligned with students' experiences and interests. I am pleased that the examiner agrees that these are high quality and appropriate for the learning objectives of the programmes.

It is also encouraging to see the quality of the formative feedback we provide being recognised, we have over the past couple of years developed a consistent approach across the core modules with multiple opportunities to obtain feedback from both staff and peers on learning tasks (presentations, reflective accounts, session summaries) and from staff on assignment plans and 3000 word drafts (both electronically and face to face in individual tutorials).

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:

No comments.

Other comments

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

No further comments.