

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 26/10/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Faculty of Medicine and Health, School of Medicine, LIME, Division of Women's & Children's Health
<i>Subject(s):</i>	Child Health
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	PGDip Child Health MSc Child Health
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	PGDip/MSc

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.
I continue to think the course and its organisers deserve high praise for their work.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

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
Nothing urgent, but I raise two points for serious consideration at the end of my report

For Examiners in the first year of appointment N/A

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 N/A

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

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
<p>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes. I re-state what I wrote last year:</p> <p>I think the PGDip Child Health is an appropriate qualification for the first part of the course (two years). It is essentially a taught course, with frequent assessments and opportunities for reflection. It would be hoped that paediatricians in training elsewhere in the country achieve similar knowledge and skills. However, the PGDip Child Health ensures that for Leeds trainees the knowledge and skills are achieved; and the course requires considerable commitment from the student.</p> <p>For the MSc, a Dissertation has to be completed in a third year. The student is still working as a paediatrician in training so this third year cannot be considered a full time research year. In this regard it is therefore not the same as a research MSc in a non-medical subject where the scope and output is more substantial. The amount of time the student can devote to the Leeds MSc Child Health is however comparable to other MSc programmes elsewhere in the UK for doctors who have to combine their day to day clinical work with the research requirements.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p>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)</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y
<p>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here: I am not involved in the assessment of these.</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
<p>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here: I do not know the answer to this question</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.

I restate what I wrote last year:

Whilst the Leeds PGDip Child Health and MSc Child Health have much unique content and teaching methods, the academic standards required are very similar to those of my own University and other Universities where I have examined. I am confident that Leeds does not have unrealistic expectations of students at this stage in their career; but nor does it allow poor performance to be overlooked.

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:

For the most part, the students are comparable to trainees in paediatrics at other UK Universities and NHS Trusts

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?	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? I am not involved in assessing all course work. Where such course work contributed to the final mark I had to agree with the rest of the Board. I was satisfied from specimen candidate answers shown to me with scores allocated and reasons given that those examiners were working according to the handbook guidelines.	Y / N
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
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>		

Other comments

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

1 I am pleased that it has been agreed that those students who do not want to undertake the MSc now do not need to draft a research proposal. Rather, they will be able to show they have looked at and understand process for research in their NHS Trusts and the importance of the NIHR. I look forward to examining such students on this basis.

2. I mentioned the point below last year but I did not receive a letter from the University in response to my report 2016-2017 (I had received a response about my 2015-2016 report).

Candidates can fail or not submit up to four module assignments but still be awarded a degree if they achieve sufficient credits overall.

Further, candidates can re-submit their module assignments if they fail them (which is I think appropriate). However, they are also allowed to fail their re-submission or indeed not re-submit and still be awarded a degree.

I think these allowances are not appropriate. The PGDip and MSc Child Health are taught degrees in order to demonstrate competence in paediatrics and child health. This requires the University to set clear standards and the student to show commitment to achieving these standards and competences. The fact that a candidate can fail up to four module assignments (or not submit them at all) and then to fail again or not re-submit and still be awarded the degree, seems to me to be contrary to acceptable academic and professional practice.

3. I think the organisers have become too flexible in how much they allow candidates to delay submissions; or postpone submissions. Of course, in situations of poor health or other hardship, planned delays must happen; and the organisers are very sympathetic in such situations. However, most of the delays or failures to meet deadlines result from student sloppiness, lack of planning or laziness. Just because the students are also undertaking clinical duties should not mean that they be allowed to be as flexible as they like with respect to the University courses. Most University courses leading to a qualification will have strict deadlines and the student will fail if they are not met.

This allowance of so much flexibility impacts on the administration of the course and its examination. I receive the proposals and dissertations for reading in dribs and drabs – never have all the expected papers been available to me when they should have been. For the administrators, it is also difficult. They end up having to contact students to find out what is happening, after deadlines are not met.

It is a vicious circle; I suspect the general feeling amongst the students is that nothing really happens if deadlines are missed and so the problem perpetuates.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Child Health

Programme(s) / Module(s):

PGDip Child Health
MSc Child Health

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

PG Dip/MSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education – SoM TPG

Faculty / School of:

School of Medicine

Address for communication:

Worsley Building, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9NL

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

We thank _____ for positive comments regarding the value of the Programme for Paediatricians at this stage of their training. We appreciate the comments that we do not have unrealistic expectations of students at this stage of their training but do not let poor performance be overlooked. We note _____ comments that mark allocation has been fair and in accordance with the standard of work submitted and University code of practice.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We appreciate _____ comments regarding the value of an alternative option for the proposal viva, which suggested previously, and agree this will enhance the educational value for students not driven to undertake their own research. We have submitted this as a module amendment to the Private Study Module but approval has not yet been given, at present we are in the process of revising the amendments for resubmission.

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:

N/A (_____ not in first year of _____ appointment).

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 thank _____ that _____ judges the Programme appropriate to the level of training in Paediatrics that our students have achieved.

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:

Very reassuring to know our standards of assessment and threshold for pass/fail and grade boundaries consistent with other Universities.

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:

_____ is thanked for his positive comments in this regard.

Other comments

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

We note and have taken on board these two comments.

Firstly – referring to passing with minimum credits – this appears to be consistent with other Postgraduate Programmes within the School of Medicine but we acknowledge _____ feels this is too generous to students comparable to other Universities. When this occurs we do follow the code of practice on assessments and ensure the students have made a genuine attempt at the modules they have failed. We will reflect on this practice going forward and ensure consistency.

_____ second point is certainly justified and on reflection we have become too understanding to students who have agreed to a particular viva date and then had problems with printing or getting the finished dissertation to us by the date requested. We will make it clear to all students that the dates for the proposal and dissertation submission are absolute and delayed submissions will not be assessed in the regular format and marks will be deduced for late submission. It is likely that as a result we will initially have some viva days where students are not examined but the importance of adhering absolutely to deadlines needs to be re-inforced. We have already acted on this and hope _____ will see evidence of this in this current academic year.