

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 24/06/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

Education

Secondary

Red Kite SCITT

PG Cert

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 clear focus of assignments which draw on teacher education research literature and require students to reflect, evaluate, critique and synthesise their ideas.
- The SCITT ensures breadth of school-based trainee activity through a range of school-based experiences; for example, the students I met described a 2-day mini placement in a school with pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) as well as contrasting placements in other settings. Each student was keen to share the broad range of school-based training experience and how much they value the post-graduate university-led aspect of their training year. When asked if they felt prepared to teach in any setting, they were confident and self-assured that they felt well placed to adapt their learning through the SCITT to any setting and context.
- I met a confident and articulate group of 6 students who very much value the academic input from the university staff and commented on how the university tutors made this aspect of the programme relevant to their school and classroom experiences.
- The students talked about the university staff's responsiveness and in particular the programme leader and praised the support they receive from both Red Kite and the University and commented on the extremely positive experience of their teacher training year.
- The cohesion and integration of both the red Kite and university aspects of the programme highlighted by the students is an example of good practice.

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 sample of assignments included a range of marked work across all band grades for each assignment. The department has responded to recommendations last year by employing a number of part-time staff to mark assignments providing a wider pool of expertise upon which to draw.
- There is a consistent approach by all markers.
- Consideration has been given to introducing a different type of assessment, for example academic poster and presentation. **However, due to the timeframe of implementing change within the university this has been delayed until 2020-21.** University and Red Kite leaders are committed to developing a more inclusive approach to assessment.

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?	N/A
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

To be completed following the 2020 EE visit

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Yes
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Yes
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Yes
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Yes
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Yes

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

The programme is well-structured and operates effectively between the university and the Red Kite SCITT schools. Students commented that they felt well prepared for any school context as they enter their NQT year and all students I met have gained school teaching employment. There is a strong and effective partnership between the SCITT and university leaders all of whom have demonstrated their commitment to create and implement a PGCE which enables trainees to develop in both the PG and school aspects of the programme. Red Kite leaders commented on the significant commitment from the university to ensure the highest quality of academic teaching and assessment is in place to complement the school aspect of the programme.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Yes
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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 assignments are well designed and require students to be involved in small scale school-based action research; their work is of a high quality. Trainees use a broad range of relevant literature and are able to demonstrate theoretical knowledge, understanding through analysis, alongside an ability to reflect on their school practice and make critical observations of the literature and present their analysis. Consideration to ethical issues is well thought through.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	No
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<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	No
<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)?	No
<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?	Yes
<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>PG Cert Assessment and Feedback</p> <p>Prior to my visit, I moderated the marking of a number of assignments from 3 assignment titles. During my visit I met with the PGCE programme lead along with university tutors and one of the Red Kite SCITT leaders. In addition, I discussed all aspects of the programme with 7 SCITT trainees.</p> <p>The summary of my findings from all of these activities is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme is well structured and assessment procedures are rigorous and in-line with other, similar programmes. • Each assignment provides a clear focus for trainees to relate their classroom practice to research. • The students talked about how the university assignments provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and to apply their academic learning and how this has changed them as practitioners. • They commented on the timing of the university days and how well thought through this is as the days are scheduled for the end of a half term/term which has enabled the students to focus on their academic studies during the school holidays. The trainees were positive about the timing of the assignment deadlines. • PG assessment marking is thorough, consistent and accurate across all assignments with clear and comprehensive feedback which addresses and relates to the marking criteria. • Marking identifies a range of aspects of relevant feedback: grammar, punctuation, referencing, strengths of the assignment and areas for improvement. <p>Areas for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a different type of assessment, for example academic poster and presentation which requires trainees to demonstrate a different range of skills and competency relevant to the teaching profession. • Ensure all markers use constructive and supportive language when providing formative feedback. This was highlighted as an issue by 2 students. It should be noted that the majority of markers feedback is highly constructive and supportive. • Consider the impact of the timing of assignments on student's workload. Although students stated this as a strength, this should be managed so that students understand the need to take some of the school holiday as a break from work and studies. 		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Yes
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Yes

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 academic standards demonstrated by the students through the marked work moderated is of a standard required for an award at PG level and is comparable with other secondary PGCE programmes in which I have been involved.

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?	Yes
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Yes
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Yes
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Yes
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Yes
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Yes
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Yes
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Yes
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Yes
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Yes.
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Yes
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Yes
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Yes, for those aspects pertinent to my EE activity.
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	N/A
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	N/A
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	N/A

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

The administrative support for me to carry out my EE role has been excellent.

Other comments

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

Strengths

- Commitment of leaders from both the university and Red Kite.
- PG aspect of the programme supports QTS development well.
- Positive relationships between the university and Red Kite leaders; the openness and willingness to change is a significant positive.
- Improved cohesion and integration of the different aspects of the programme.
- Confident and articulate students who very much value their Leeds University staff and experiences, commenting particularly on the staff responsiveness and support and the extremely positive experience of their year.
- The students talked about how the assessments provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and that this has changed them as practitioners.
- Assignments from the university provide detailed feedback which students appreciate.
- Well planned university days to help students apply their learning to both practice and assignments.

For consideration by University and Red Kite SCITT programme leaders:

- Further integration and cohesion of the academic aspect of the programme with Red Kite mentors in relation to their understanding of the assignments – students could articulate the rare occasion where this was done well and therefore wanted more.
- **Strongly consider introducing university input on how to write a literature** review very early on in the programme. This was highlighted by all students I met, they talked about their different subjects and academic writing contexts as the need for this session prior to the first assignment.
- **Consider introducing a non-assessed written assignment** in the early aspect of the programme to provide formative feedback to support their academic writing.
- Strongly consider **using the PGT criteria rubrics more explicitly** across all assessments – this is especially important for feeding forward for students and is a strong feature of the Primary English assignment
- **Consider the balance and diet of input on the university days** to build on the aspects students found most valuable, ie. theoretical and applied learning.

Congratulations to both the university tutors and to Red Kite for another successful year.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)*Title and Name of Examiner:*

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

PGCE (SCITT) Secondary

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

PGCE

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Teacher Education

Faculty / School of:

School of Education

Address for communication:

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

We are pleased that you found that the programme's assignments draw on the research literature and challenge students' thinking. When the programme was developed with Red Kite Teacher Training this was seen a key function of the University's provision. Your comment about the cohesiveness and integration of the two sides of the programme (university and school) confirms that both partners are fulfilling their different roles.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

It is our intention to diversify (make more inclusive) the nature of the assignments by changing one of the essay assignments to a poster presentation. We will consult with our partners and, hopefully, have this in place for the 2020-2021 session. It is pleasing to read your comments on the marking process and particularly the consistency of marking given the increased number of markers.

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:

None

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:

None

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 pleased that you recognise the strength of the partnership between Red Kite Teacher Training and the University and the role of programme leaders in both institutions in forging these links. The programme could not work effectively in training high quality teachers if there wasn't this level of collaboration.

The point you make about students' use of relevant literature in their assignments is further testament to the success of the evidence-based approach to teacher education that the partnership employs. You have identified what we hope happens, that is, that the research and theory the students encounter through their University work compliments and supports their practical teaching in schools.

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:

The positive comments that you make on Assessment and Feedback are most welcome. I have addressed the point about diversifying the types of assignments above. We do appreciate the need to do this as it not only affords students the opportunity to use a greater range of skills but also models good educational practice. We identified the issue of markers' use of constructive language in feedback from students early on last year. This has been addressed through the standardisation meetings prior to the start of marking an assignment. Examples of good practice are shared with colleagues. We will continue to be proactive about this and also monitor student feedback closely in the next session.

In relation to the timing of assignments we have planned the submission dates carefully in discussion with Red Kite Teacher Training to try to spread the students' workload as evenly as possible. Next year Red Kite have slightly modified the timing of the two week break between the two school placements (to just after the Christmas holiday) so we have move the submission date of Assignment 2 to the end of the placement break (mid-January instead of immediately after the holiday) to allow students to use the time when they are not in school. We make a conscious effort to discuss assignment submission dates across the year from the start of the programme to help students plan their work. It is not possible to move the submission dates further on in the year as we have to complete all the assessments in time for summer graduation. We appreciate the need to be mindful of trainee teachers' workload and the impact that this could have on their teaching and their well-being in general. Red Kite have added an additional Golden Thread (priority area) of Professional Resilience to further raise students' awareness of the need to plan ahead and to build skills and attitudes that will protect them and help them cope with the demands of teaching.

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:

I am pleased that these aspects are all satisfactory

Other comments

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

It is most pleasing that you identified so many strengths in the programme, this is testament to the hard work and expertise of all colleagues in the Partnership, and to the very able trainee teachers.

In relation to the points for consideration that you identify:

- With our partners we will seek to identify ways to support school-based mentors' understanding of the requirements of the University assignments
- We do address the writing of literature reviews with the students in relation to each of their assignments (as relevant). We will give this further consideration as a result of your feedback.
- We provide a considerable amount of in-session guidance for the assignments, particularly the first assignment, for example, reviewing two assignments that were written by students in the past. Given the grades achieved by the students we are satisfied that the support we provide for essay writing is sufficient. We would be concerned that a non-assessed assignment would increase students' work load, something that we are trying to manage in their best interests.
- We will discuss the use of the assessment criteria grid on Turnitin for all assignments for the next session.
- We agree that University taught sessions need to be varied and actively engage the students, this is good practice and it is important to model to the trainee teachers. As a result of your feedback we will review our sessions to ensure that an appropriate balance of teaching and learning styles in used.

Thank you again for your positive and constructive feedback and support, this is very helpful in moving the partnership forward.