

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 14/08/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Faculty of Medicine and Health, School of Dentistry

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Third year (DSUR3014, 3015, 3019, 3210, 3240, 3250 including the OSCE assessment)

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

BChD

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 OSCE was obviously well organised and of a very high standard.

The involvement and integration of all staff including academic, nursing and administrative staff was excellent.

The provision of feedback to any student committing a clinically unacceptable error was another example of good practice, as was the idea of using "never incident" notification cards.

The calibration of staff between stations on the day was another good idea, as was having a paper back-up in case of issues with the IT system. The statistical analysis was also carried out to a very high standard

The assignment in PPD3 were of a generally high standard and the marking rubrics were excellent.

The written examinations assessed were of an appropriate style and level. The examination process was carried out with a high degree of academic rigour.

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 OSCE was run faultlessly with every consideration being taken to ensure student wellbeing. The issue were students could "listen in" to other stations was addressed.

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 only

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y / N
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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

For Examiners completing their term of appointment only

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

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

The programme meets national requirements and is well structured, giving students a balanced curriculum with emphasis on clinical activity as I would expect of a programme leading to a professional clinical qualification

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)

There is obviously input from research into the programme, not only in the evidence based approach to clinical aspects but also the emphasis on statistics

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:

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

The OSCE was extremely well run this year. Student briefings were excellent and appropriate. The examiners and standard patients were well calibrated and trained. There are a few suggestions for improvement, for example if the BPE in station 8 was 3 in all sextants that could improve the flexibility to examine in all sextant and thus add variation to the station. I would also consider adding radiographs into station where students explain periodontal disease to the patient. I was pleased to see enlarged radiographs. They could also add in checking the patient's name and date of birth to station 1 when checking medical history. I did not see any of the crown preparation models this year, so assume that the students did well. Last year this was appropriately assessed.

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i> The programme appears to meet GDC requirements, with the curriculum mapped to GDC learning Outcomes "Preparing for Practice" (2015) document.</p>		

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 assessment methods are appropriate for the ILOs. The clinical components are assessed by standard methods such as OSCEs and clinical practical examinations and student knowledge by SSAQs and MCQs</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 general standard of achievement is good and is comparable to other Dental Schools.</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> <p>The overall standard is excellent. However as I recommended last year, the EMQs are generally NOT EMQs, they appear to be MCQs with the answer options placed within an EMQ framework. As EMQs are notoriously difficult to construct in dentistry I wonder if it wouldn't be simpler to acknowledge this and ask the same questions in an MCQ format.</p> <p>In addition the MCQ's themselves are provided with one best answer and four distractors. This makes it difficult and time consuming for staff to compile new questions. Furthermore the education literature suggests that the addition of a 4th distractor has limited extra value over 3 distractors. I would therefore recommend looking at the format and perhaps changing to a 3 distractor format. This may also help reduce the number of negatively phrased questions as I feel this has arisen as it is easier to think of 4 positive distractors and one best negative answer than it is to think of four incorrect but plausible answers.</p> <p>The way the data is collated from all the previous examinations should allow you to see if any of the distractors are never used, which I noticed occurred on quite a large proportion of the questions, and thus amend your current question bank accordingly. My hope would be that by simplifying the process the staff would then be able to provide new questions more easily.</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?	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?	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> The School made me feel very welcome once again. The administration processes were well organised and information was always available.</p>		

Other comments

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

Once again students wore name badges during the OSCE. Whilst I acknowledge it is very important to identify that the correct student is at the correct station and am aware that most of the staff know most of the students I still feel this examination should be as anonymous as possible. Identifying the student's by their clinic code may resolve this issue. I am concerned that students with a reputation, not known by sight by all the examiners may suffer adversely, based on their reputation if this is not done.

The Special Circumstances Board provides students with support as well as evaluating their fitness to partake in the assessment and I feel the modification made this year to shorten the length of the meetings was appropriate.. Unfortunately, the timing of the sitting of the Board still occasionally leaves a long delay between the providing of evidence and the evaluation of that evidence. This can mean that, should supplementary evidence be required, the idea time for providing this has past.

I have made recommendations earlier about the EMQ's MCQ's and as I said in the previous year, the programme and assessments demonstrate complete academic rigour and are certainly fit for purpose. My thoughts and recommendations are made to try and help that process by lessening the obviously high burden on the staff whilst maintaining the high standard currently demonstrated.

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

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MChD Third year (DSUR3014, 3015, 3019, 3210, 3240, 3250 including the OSCE assessment)

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

MChD/BChD, BSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School (Dean of the School of Dentistry)

Faculty / School of:

Faculty of Medicine and Health, School of Dentistry

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) must be sent 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

Thank you for your comments relating to the organisation and high standard of the OSCE. We are pleased that you observed that the full range of staff were involved and integrated. Similarly, we are pleased that you found the use of feedback cards to notify students of clinically unacceptable errors to be an example of good practise. It is good to hear that you felt that the calibration of staff between stations was a good idea and that appropriate contingency plans were in place should there be an IT issue.

We are pleased to hear that you found the statistical analysis of the OSCE examination data was of a very high standard. It is reassuring that you also found the assignments in PPD3 to be of a generally high standard and the marking rubrics excellent.

It is reassuring that you note the year 3 written examinations were appropriate in style and level and that the examination process involved a high degree of academic rigour.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Thank you for your observation of our consideration of student wellbeing in the OSCE and noting the improvements made.

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:

Not applicable.

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:

Not applicable.

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 found that the aims and outcomes can be met and are commensurate with the level of the award and comparable with similar programmes. It is reassuring that you find the programme meets national requirements, that it is well-structured and the curriculum is balanced and appropriate.

We are pleased that you have found the input from research into the programme to be obvious, with an evidence-based approach and significant emphasis on statistics. We will consider your suggestions for possible changes to the OSCE stations. We would be pleased for you to review the models for the 18/19 cohort and these are of course available for you to inspect should you wish to do so at any point. We are happy that you felt that the crown preparations for the prior CSB crowns test have been assessed appropriately. If there is any element of an assessment which you have not had sight of or require further information please do discuss this with our Assessment Team who would be happy to assist.

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:

You note that the programme design clearly aligns with the learning outcomes and that the assessment methods are appropriate for the ILOs. This is reassuring as is your observation that the methods used are standard and that the design and structure are appropriate. It is good that you find the general standard of achievement of our students to be good and comparable to other dental schools. We are happy that you find the overall standard of our assessment and feedback to be excellent. Thank you for your observations in relation to EMQ and MCQ design which we will consider. We do review the data for MCQ questions and we have been considering the potential benefits and implications of reducing the number of distractors.

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 indication that you were with the appropriate amount of information and opportunity to evaluate the Progression and Awards process and that you found all relevant areas satisfactory. We are grateful for your acknowledgement in comments that the administrative processes were well organised and that any information required was always available. We are very pleased that you felt welcome.

Other comments

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

Thank you for your further comment regarding anonymity of students in the OSCE. We maintain that the most reliable check under exam conditions is the candidate name. Candidates will be known to virtually all examiners. We are content that the examination is as objective as is possible. The marking criteria are specifically designed to ensure objectivity in marking. Examiner training, briefing and calibration is carefully conducted to ensure that professionalism and objectivity are maintained. The statistical analysis of the examination data is rigorous and explicitly seeks to identify any anomaly in intra- or inter-examiner marking and any anomalous marking of a candidate. This matter will be further discussed at our Assessment and Standards Board.

We are pleased that you have observed the support provided to students by the Special Circumstance Board. We note your observation regarding the timing of the board and will consider this.

We appreciate your comments, as above, in relation to the EMQ and MCQ assessments. It is reassuring that you find the programme and assessments demonstrate complete academic rigour. We acknowledge that there is a high burden on staff from assessments. We are continuing to rationalise assessment where possible as we move forward, whilst maintaining standards. We thank you for your observation that the standards demonstrated in assessment are high.