

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Medicine

Subject(s):

MRes Medicine

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MEDS5010
MEDS5020

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

MRes

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards**Points of innovation and/or good practice**

This is the first year in which the MREs Medicine has been led by . Their attention to detail and the student experience are commendable. The increased numbers of applications to the course for 2019/20 speaks to this. I have had resoundingly positive feedback from students about the new leadership.

Enhancements made from the previous year

The new approach to liaise should two markers provide significantly different scores is sensible.

Matters for Urgent Attention

I understand that two students (20% of the cohort) – both intercalators, both about to enter the final year of MBBS – will currently not be awarded their MRes until 2020, because they had an approved absence from an examination in one module and the scheduling of exam boards after their late replacement attempt.

I would consider it a priority to ensure there was a way for them to record their degree – and its level – on their Foundation Programme Applications in late 2019. Either or both students may be applying for the Academic Foundation Programme.

It would be a great shame if the Faculty was unable to support these students and recognise their achievements of 2019/20 in this important application process.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment only (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 only (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
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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 is well-structured and focussed on the acquisition of practical research skills and experience. Given the number of credits, I wonder if the assessment burden (7 pieces of written work including exams) and commensurate double marking burden, is appropriate. Assessment drives learning – but equally students tend to shift their focus on exam preparation and essay writing according to deadlines. Their research learning through the year risks a stop/start approach as they prioritise their time according to assessment task.

I suspect there would be benefit in setting out descriptors for project supervisors of the kind of project that may be suitable, and the extent of supervision expected. While student choice in selecting the research project is commendable, the differences in attainability and perhaps suitability were apparent from student presentations. It may be possible to more carefully balance this as the leadership team gain a longitudinal view of 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)

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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Research practice components, that may be clinically-focussed, but not clinical practice per se.

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
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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.

Please see comment to question 12 above.		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award? Largely – but please see comment to question 12 above. Refinement would be sensible in my view.	
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><i>The programme is selected by high-achieving medical students, and high performing science BSc graduates who do equally well. It is not surprising then that many graduate with a merit or distinction. Having witnessed the majority of the research talks, I was impressed with the standards demonstrated.</i></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><i>Feedback provided is constructive and timely.</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? But the feedback provided was clear in referring directly to the written work	N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate? Please see my second written comment in section 12 above. I suspect there is room for improvement here.	
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? They were excellent	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting? I attended the Oral Presentations and Meeting of the Committee of Assessors as directed by the Programme Leads. Award recommendations were made. I am happy to join the formal Awards Board from a distance if beneficial.	

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

I have no doubt that this programme will continue to grow in popularity.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)***Title and Name of Examiner:*

Subject(s):

Medicine

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MRes Medicine

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

MRes

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education TPG-SoM / Joint Course Leads

Faculty / School of:

Medicine

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 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 thank the external examiner for the good feedback and will continue to strive to maintain and improve standards.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Again, we thank the external examiner for their support. We will continue to work towards further improvements.

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:

We have liaised with school management and arranged examination meetings to ensure that these students received their appropriate documentation in time, before the start of their foundation year and they were able to obtain the credits for their foundation year.

We will explore with the postgraduate studies teams how to avoid this sort of situation arising in future but within the guidance of the University of Leeds QAT procedures.

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:

No comments to address

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 have reduced the amount of double marking for longer assessments in line with University of guidelines. Last year was our first running this course, and we left the structure much as we inherited it. As we gain experience we are vetting potential projects more carefully, and liaising with potential supervisors to make sure that projects are realistic within the timeframe.

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 assessments were spread out following requests from students to not have too much assessment imminent at any one time. They are continuing to request this, and asking for more spread. We will look at balancing the students' requests, and the efficiency of the project.

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 to address

Other comments

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

We thank the external examiner for confidence in our course.