

Open University Validation Partnerships

External Examiner report template

Section A: General information

Institution:	Leeds City college
Programme:	Masters in Biomedical Science
Subject examined:	<p>Modules contained in the Masters in Biomedical Science</p> <p>Applied Biomedical Techniques</p> <p>Cellular Pathology</p> <p>Preparation for Research</p> <p>Advanced Pharmacology and Toxicology</p> <p>Bioinformatics</p> <p>Diagnostic Techniques</p> <p>Dissertation</p>
Name of examiner:	Dr Neill Horley
Address:	
E-mail:	
Current year of appointment	2020-2021

Section B: External examiner's report

The reporting structure of this section is intended to help draw out issues which may require attention by the Institution or the University. It should not be seen as limiting in any way the range of issues which may be addressed or the level of detail given. The report will be considered as part of the annual evaluation process and, as such, external examiners are encouraged to be as frank and open as possible, but avoiding wherever possible references to individual staff or students. External examiners' attention is also drawn to 'The Guide for external examiners of OU validated awards', which should be forwarded by partner institutions to their external examiners.

Please comment as appropriate on:
1. The range of assessed material and information provided by the institution on which your report is based to include confirmation that sufficient evidence was received to enable your role to be fulfilled.
In all the modules I have moderated over the academic year a clear and concise body of documentation was provided to enable me to carry out my duties as an external examiner. I was given a sufficient number of examples of the various coursework, exam papers and student reports to enable me to fulfil my external examiner role.
2. Whether the standards set are appropriate for the award, or award element, by reference to any agreed subject benchmarks, qualifications framework, programme specification or other relevant information.
The program has provided me with documentation to determine that the awards allocated to the students for the various components of the different modules are in line with the agreed subject benchmarks. I found this process to be a very transparent process.
3. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.
The sample of material provided in the various modules is aligned to the awards allocated to students from comparable institutes and programmes. The sample of coursework provided shows a good cross section of the marks for the submitted material for this programme. The work provided across the modules moderated this year has enabled me to see the spread of student capabilities across the cohort.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students
As with all cohorts there are a sliding scale of capabilities within this current cohort. The majority of the cohort have engaged with the assessment material to the level required for the award. Students work shows an ability to apply knowledge from the course and apply it to the various assessments set in the modules. The students have shown the ability use acquired knowledge and propose strategies for planning experiments and critically evaluate data.
There are a number of students on the course who have not engaged with the process well and this is evidenced by similar grades being obtained across different modules. There is evidence of module team support in these cases.

5. The quality of teaching and learning, as indicated by student performance

The material provide to the students is detailed, organised and graduated. There is a wealth of documentation provided so that the students understand what is required of them for each of the module assessments. Module handbooks provide sufficient information to guide students in what is required in the various modules. All assessments are supported by robust rubics and quality feedback so that the students can learn from any deficiencies in their work. The quality of teaching is excellent and engaging.

6. The quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources

The material provided is of an excellent standard. Assessments utilised demonstrate the student's knowledge and practical abilities. Many of the case studies are substantial pieces of work and reflect the students understanding of the material delivered. There are a number of useful learning resources provide by the teaching staff which students have clearly utilised in their assessments.

7. The quality and fairness of the assessments, in particular their:

(i) design and structure

The course consists of a wide variety of assessment material. Enabling the students to demonstrate their abilities and understanding of delivered material.

All assessments have a detailed assessment brief with clearly defined rubics attached to them. I was very impressed with the detailed breakdown on all assessments as to where marks were attributed and what key skills were being assessed.

There is a robust moderation procedure in place and the information feedback to the students is detailed, pointed and constructive.

There is clear evidence that marks have been allocated in accordance with student capabilities.

(ii) relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme

Assessments have clear structure and alignment to the various modules objectives and learning outcomes. Assessments are clearly set out to determine the student's cognitive skills, practical and professional skills as well as importantly the student's transferable skills. There is a clear evolution of the students learning across the modules as well connectivity across modules which is an important component of the course.

(iii) marking to include comments on whether marking scheme / grading criteria has been consistently applied

I have been fortunate to be involved first hand in the moderation process with some of the more challenging student assessment material. The programme team have continuously endeavoured to ensure consistence across all module assessments. A point of extremely good practice was the robust approach to ensuring that assessments at grade boundaries were examined and aligned to institute qualification frameworks.

Although the modules within the programme have very different learning outcomes and types of assessments it is clear to see that a consistent marking scheme has been applied.

Feedback given by the team is excellent. The internal moderation sheet provided in each

assessment is very useful for seeing where the sample material fits in the overall spread of marks. The marks obtained show a good spread of student capabilities and response to the assessment.

8. Where the programme has specific work-related learning outcomes (e.g. Apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees) please comment on the assessment and achievement of these outcomes, including employers' involvement where relevant.

N/A

9. The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards, briefing of external examiners, access of external examiners to essential materials, etc.

The boards have been well organised and supporting documents have been provided in a timely manner. Exam board meetings have been organised via a virtual meeting format and the use of distinct times for external examiners to be available has proved to be a very effective format.

Material has been provided in a very easily accessible format with the ability to access a sample of the assessment material no matter the size of the documents via an online repository.

One thing that could be improved upon for the forthcoming academic year is access to the material to be moderated and quality assured with more of a window to be looked at.

All assessment material is provided with a very good overview of the assessment brief, good sample of students work with very robust student feedback. I believe the internal moderation and supporting documentation is excellent.

10. Have all the issues identified in your previous report been addressed by the institution?

YES/NO – please delete as appropriate

If no, please comment

Not relevant as this is my first year in post

11.

Please confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme as a whole, including all its pathways, modules or individual courses are consistent and appropriate, and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair, reliable and transparent across the provision.

(For those with responsibility across the whole programme or for chief external examiners – if in doubt please check with the appointing institution)

Quality of teaching is excellent, all staff highly engaged and committed to ensuring that all students are given equal support where required

The majority of students are enthusiastic and seem to be enjoying their time on the course. Despite a very unusual year teaching and assessments continued uninterrupted, I was impressed with the depth of interaction staff have had with students, as well as the way staff quickly adapted content and assessments to the current situation.

Setting of exams and assessment-based tasks were well designed and broad enough to test a range of abilities from low to high performing students.

Feedback on all tasks was clear and detailed enabling students to identify areas they performed well in and those where improvement is required.

12. Any other comments

I have found the year to be very engaging and working with the MSc team has been a very pleasant and informative experience.

Please ensure that you sign and date below, if sending a hard copy of this report

Signed:



Date:

15/11/21