



The Open  
University

## Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP)

### External Examiner report template

An electronic copy of this report should be sent to:

cicp-external-examiners@open.ac.uk

Or, a signed hard copy sent to:

The Director, CICP, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA,  
United Kingdom.

You should also submit a copy of this report to the institution.

### Section A: General information

<b>Institution:</b>	<b>Leeds City College</b>
<b>Programme:</b>	<b>MA Education</b>
<b>Subject examined:</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Name of examiner:</b>	<b>Dr Mary Mihovilović</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>E-mail:</b>	
<b>Current year of appointment</b>	<b>2</b>

## 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.

<b>Please comment as appropriate on:</b>
1. The range of assessed material and information provided by the institution on which your report is based.
<b>Context</b> The MA Education is a new programme, introduced in September 2018. Therefore, this is the first cohort and understandably small in size. I examined two modules:  1. Educational Inquiry 2. Change Management in Education
<b>The Sample</b> The sample, included all candidates' assessment tasks due to the small cohort size.
<b>Information provided</b> This report is based on the programme and module documentation and evidence of moderation of assignments that I received from the Programme Lead.
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 module assignments I examined demonstrated a range of marks from mid-40s to low 70s. The marks awarded are consistent. I can confirm that the marking criteria and the application of grades are in line with the judgements of my own and other university, with which I am familiar. The strongest components, graded in the 70s, demonstrated some criticality and conceptual understanding. In weaker assignments referencing was not always complete, colloquialisms and a lack of precision in the use of language obscured the argument, writing was predominantly descriptive rather than analytical detracting from the rigour of the argument and unsubstantiated assertions were made. Unsubstantiated assertions and colloquial language are not consistently challenged. In places research methodology and methods are conflated leading to a lack of conceptual clarity.
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 quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills are comparable to those of students on similar programmes with which I am familiar. However, there is scope to

challenge students to develop their criticality and argumentation through detailed, focused marking.

#### 4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The range of the students' ability is broad. The strongest components, graded in the 70s, demonstrated criticality, originality of thought and conceptual understanding. In other assignments referencing is not always complete, colloquialisms and a lack of precision in the use of language weakens the argument, writing is predominantly descriptive rather than analytical detracting from the rigour of the argument and unsubstantiated assertions were made.

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

Student knowledge and understanding of content indicates insightful teaching. The quality of writing sometimes obscures the clarity of the argument. I suggest that the team review the provision for developing Academic Writing at M level and ensure that students are challenged to use scholastic language appropriately and reference accurately.

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

The programme is innovative, challenging and practice-oriented enabling students to develop their knowledge and understanding and articulate their arguments, as reflexive practitioners, positioning them well to engage in current debates and develop their voice as authentic professionals as they study subsequent modules and develop a research enquiry. The tasks encourage complex, multi-layered thinking and originality of thought

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

##### (i) design and structure

The assessments are well designed allowing students the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject, link theory to practice and position themselves within current educational debates

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

The assignments are aligned closely with the objective and learning outcomes.

##### (iii) marking

Marking is inconsistent between modules both in the format and content as noted in my feedback to the June Board. In some cases there are no comments on the assignments. This makes it very difficult for students to identify what they have done well and where and how improvement could be made. Turnitin offers the opportunity to use both tag comments and insert typed comments, which can be targeted at specific aspects of the assignment thus highlighting strengths and suggesting how the writing could be improved. I have suggested that the programme team's use of Turnitin and Grademark is reviewed and developed to support students at all levels in recognising their strengths and giving practical examples of how to improve. In this way tutors can target M Level writing or challenge thinking in their feedback. This would enhance the students' learning from their assignment. Where tag comments are used the marking continues to focus on grammar and structure, rather than the quality of the argument being made.

8. Where the programme has specific work-related learning outcomes (e.g. 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 administration of the Examination Boards, the communication with staff and access to materials and assessment tasks has been efficient and timely. Staff have been most helpful.

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

The recommendation that the tutors could consider annotating the students' assignments in addition to providing summary comments as this would enable students to identify specific examples of strength or aspects for development has not been implemented consistently – see section 7.2019 Annual report

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

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 and sound across the provision.

I confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme and the modules I have examined are consistent and appropriate, and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair and sound across the provision.

12. Any other comments

As the student numbers grow and more tutors are involved consistency in marking will be crucial and I would encourage the programme team to put in place the appropriate training and processes in readiness. .

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

Signed:



Date:

5<sup>th</sup> August 2020