

External Examiner's Report

Year: 2020-21

Name of External Examiner	Dr Laura Pellatt
Name of Course(s)	Foundation Year and Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Science
Name of LCC Course Manager	
Date of Board Examiners	24 th June 2021
Date of Report	16 th August 2021

Introduction

External Examiners are required by the terms of their appointment to submit an annual report. The report will be considered in depth during course/ provision annual monitoring and review activity. A record of the departments' responses to examiners' reports also forms part of the documentation for this activity.

External Examiner's report summary

Please indicate in the relevant boxes below whether you agree with the statements about the standards of Leeds City College's awards, the standards of student performance and the conduct of the College's assessment processes.

Please also list any shortcomings and areas for commendation. You should expand on any issues you mention here in the main report.

Standards set		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the standards set for the awards are appropriate."	X	
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.		

Student performance			
	Yes	No	N/A *
	X		

<p>“In my view, the standards of student performance are comparable with similar course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar.”</p> <p>I have reviewed a sample of student work from the collaborative / franchise institution and in my view the standards of student performance are comparable with students studying the award(s) at Leeds Met</p> <p><i>* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess national standards please indicate here.</i></p>	<p>X</p>		
<p><i>If your answer is ‘no’, please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i></p>			
<p>Conduct of processes</p>			
<p>“In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.”</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	
	<p>X</p>		
<p><i>If your answer is ‘no’, please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i></p>			

<p>Areas for commendation</p>
<p>Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes</p>
<p>Personalised and constructive feedback, some feedforward feedback which allows students to improve upon final submission.</p> <p>Clear assignment briefs which are available to students at the start of the term.</p> <p>The creativity and commitment which is seen with the change in assessments, especially for some practicals, of staff during this year. This needs to be recognised and applauded.</p>

Main report

In this section you are asked to describe more fully how the College has or has not maintained academic standards and the quality of the student experience in relation to the course(s) for which you are the external examiner.

Please write a report (in addition to completing the Summary) in sections under all the following areas.

<p>(a) The operation and conduct of the Board of Examiners (and any Mitigation Panel or Examination Committee meeting you may also have attended).</p>
<p>This is my first year as external examiner and all meetings have been virtual. All members of the board of examiners were professional during these meetings (SAP and PAB term 1 and term 2 boards).</p>

Module grades were reviewed, and student profiles were discussed with careful consideration of those students that were eligible for compensation.

(b) The action, if any was required, taken in response to your report of last year. (This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time.)

This is my first report.

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.

The distribution of grades within each module are comparable to other institutions which deliver the extended and foundation programmes within a college. The varied ability of the students account for the wide-ranging grades.

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.

As this is my first year, and the unpredictability of this year would have made it difficult for students with the change in delivery from in person to online. I cannot comment on the strengths and weaknesses of students but reviewing next year's work will help with commenting on this.

(e) The standards of the structure, organisation, design and marking of all examination papers and/or other forms of assessment.

The assessments within each module are appropriate and reflect the level of study. There is a clear jump in expectation of students between year 1 and year 2 with the assessments and examinations. This is seen in the analytical, evaluative and challenge assessed in most assignments and exams at level 5. There is some disparity in expectations and marking of reports between modules, for some there needs to be better breakdown and allocation of marks which is seen for some modules such as in chemistry subjects.

(f) The curriculum, teaching or resourcing of the programme(s) of study as indicated by the performance of the students in the assessment.

As this is my first year and it being remote, I haven't been able to visit and meet the team. From the work submitted with the handbooks, there are no concerns with curriculum and reflects the standards expected at these levels for these programmes.

(g) Comments on the use of the VLE within the course(s) (if applicable)..

I was not able to access the VLE

(h) Module content, consistency of modules and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes.

Fundamental biology and fundamental chemistry – Clear assignment briefs and marking criteria given and extensive level of feedback given with more descriptive feedback given to low grade students on how to improve.

Integrated biomolecular science – There is some feedback that is fed forward for the poster, but not as descriptive. The lab report lacks detail in the feedback especially for those with low grades.

Physiology and pharmacology – There were no scripts to view for the exam, the lab report had high marks compared to other modules, there was a varied level of feedback given.

PPD – Good assessment, which was varied and interesting, it allowed students to develop ownership of their assessment. There was some discrepancies between 1st and 2nd marker, may have be beneficial to get a 3rd marker for large differences in grades.

Microbiology – I question the use of an open book exam at L5? This is not challenging enough at this level. There was a lot of confusion on the aims and methodologies of the lab report, but the pandemic and studying at home may have contributed to this.

Pharmacology and therapeutics – The breakdown of marks were clear to students as to where marks were lost or gained. Didn't see any exam scripts.

Academic skills – Could not access due to the nature of the activity. The grades were a good range for task 1 with feedback given. The lowest grade had little feedback but did direct to where marks would have been gained. Varied topics for task 2 but did show what students wanted to learn and present. The written feedback is very descriptive and detailed. A marking scheme would provide a clear indication of where the marks were awarded.

Further biology – There is no clear conversation of an agreed mark for both items of assessment. For the exam, some of the marks were across grade boundaries and a pass/fail. There needs to be clearer justification and explanation of the grade change and using a third marker would help. The practical is applicable to level 3 and is clear in what students need to do. The exam uses different question styles which assesses student's retained knowledge and emerging analytical skills.

Further chemistry – Great from the start where students are made aware of GLP and RAs which are part of their assessments. For both task 1 and 2, marks are appointed within the mark scheme, but are not

provided to the students. Feedback is constructive and indicates where marks are given. If students are provided with the marks prior to submission of the second report, this would help with students using the feedback to improve before submitting.

Maths (L3) – The handbook doesn't have the same depth of information as other handbooks especially with advanced reading. Students tend to either know or not know with maths, which is reflective of the grades seen.

Biochemical processes – The tasks are appropriately adapted for the current year. Those students with a bare pass, how are these students supported? The highest mark for the exam was 44 which questions how well these students were prepared for the exam.

Integrated practical skills – Feedback is personalised and provides constructive detail on areas to improve. For the presentation, it is not clear where grades were given even with the criteria.

Maths (L4) – These assessments are too similar to the L3. There were no scripts to view for either task 1 or 2.

Organic chemistry – Chemistry assessments were in depth with multiple parts. The assignment briefs provided good guidance but may consider displaying where marks were applied.

Biomaterials and solid-state chemistry – Appropriate coursework for level of study. The style of exam lends well to the topic area. Feedback given is justifiable for marks.

Genetics – For the ppt presentation there is a clear difference in the standards and effort of the students which was reflected in the marks given. This is a relevant assessment to assess the student's ability to evaluate and describe each case. The exam is a clear assessment of student's acquisition of knowledge, but some comments given by assessor are not clear with where the answer is correct or where marks are apportioned.

Immunology – There is only one exceptional student and rest are very low pass. Both essay and exam are appropriate for this level. Marks are fair with good feedback which aligns with the marking criteria in the handbook. There are many marks on the grade boundary for the exam, especially if it is the moderated mark. This may be something you may need to justify if questioned by student.

Medicinal chemistry – There is a good breakdown of marks for the report and constructive feedback on both scripts. The exam is very similar style to L4, this needs to assess more the student's interpretation and discussion.

Scientific investigation – It is clear students are supported throughout the term. The assessment reflects the level of study with being analytical and evaluative. Good feed forward feedback provided on drafts. Consideration needs to be given to ensure all students submit. The range of marks and feedback is appropriate and at times extensive.

(i) Areas of good practice you have identified – please expand on the key areas for commendation listed in the summary.

Very clear handbooks – identifies the areas of study, breaking down subjects in the scheme of work with additional reading suggestions and associated practicals, this consolidates the theory with practice. Students are made aware the assignment briefs at the start of term.

Some personalised and constructive feedback given, especially where students were made aware of where marks were gained or lost.

(j) The College welcomes external examiners' comments on its developing academic regulatory framework. Such comments may not have a direct bearing on standards set and achieved or the conduct of processes and so it may not be appropriate to include them elsewhere in this report or its summary. Please record any concerns or comments you may have here.

Overlap on assessments between levels – may need to show a more defined difference in some modules.

To ensure there is clarity in where marks are allocated and to provide detailed feedback across all modules.

External Examiners' Report Checklist
Please comment for all boxes

Course Materials				
Did you receive?		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Course Handbook(s)?	X		
b.	Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate?		X	
c.	Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)?	X		
d.	Assessment briefs/marking criteria?	X		

Draft examination papers				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft papers?		X	
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?		X	
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?			
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			

Draft assessment activities				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft assessment activities?		X	
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?		X	
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the assessment activities appropriate?			
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			


Student Work				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you offered the opportunity to select your sample?		X	
a.	Was the full range of assessment activities made available for you to sample?	X		

b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	X		
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Examination Committee/Board of Examiners				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you able to attend the meetings?	X		
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?	X		
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Examination Committee/Board of Examiners?	X		

For all External Examiners

Signature



Date:

16th August 2021