



Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP)

External Examiner report template

Section A: General information

Institution:	Leeds City College
Programme:	Foundation Degree Children's Care, Learning and Development
Subject examined:	Foundation Degree Children's Care, Learning and Development
Current year of appointment	4th Year

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.

I have been provided with module handbooks and moderation paperwork for each module

on the degree. I have been able to access Turnitin and all the student work for all modules to sample. This has given me a good range of material on which to base my report.

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 award is mapped to QAA Foundation degree qualification benchmark statements and acknowledges the distinctive features of Foundation Degrees in terms of developing practice for those employed in the sector. This is clear in the module and programme design. The course is of a comparable standard to those at other institutions with which I am familiar. The programme teams have continued to develop a coherent programme with the core aim of developing competent and confident practitioners who will work with children and their families to achieve the best outcomes. The QAA in its 2020 Characteristics statement for Foundation degrees has highlighted the need for flexibility within courses to cater for a range of students from diverse backgrounds. The range of assignments and topics studied within the degree lend themselves to meeting the standards set by this document.

The Course team have been very pro-active in dealing with the changes necessary due to COVID19.

The assessments are set at the right level. The objectives of the programme are clearly articulated, and Learning Outcomes and assessments are clearly aligned to these.

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 modules across the levels of the degree provide a very thorough grounding in all aspects of children's care, learning and development and provides a solid springboard for students' future career choices. The quality of students' work is comparable to programmes I am familiar with elsewhere.

4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The degree is carefully structured to allow students to develop confidence in their learning and practice. A diverse range of assessments allow students to show this through different formats eg posters, portfolios, presentations, micro teaching sessions. It is possible to see in the more highly graded pieces of work that the degree has been transformational for students in terms of alignment of theory to practice and developing confidence and underpinning knowledge to support their practice.

Students have struggled this year with online learning and lack of opportunities to meet face to face. This has impacted on their work, particularly at Level 5 where there are some fails. It is to be hoped that this will improve with a return to face to face teaching. It would also be useful to encourage students to make use of the offer from the tutors to read draft work and provide feedback.

The students are to be congratulated on some thoughtful pieces of work which are of a good standard and indicate impact on practice.

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

The quality of teaching is reflected in students really being engaged in the modules and

where they have understood the task fully, they have received higher grades for their work. At Level 4, practical tasks relating to the workplace give students confidence in showing their knowledge and practice. It can be a wobbly start for some as they grapple with academic reading and referencing but this does develop over the course of the degree to a point where at Level 5, most students are accessing a wider range of reading to support assignments. For example, in Semester 2 Safeguarding module, students are structuring their work and looking at issues within a wider context and impact of these. At Level 5, for example, Social Policy, the higher scoring students are developing critical thinking and analysis. There are some thoughtful presentations in Supportive Learning Environments module which indicate the quality of teaching to enable students to achieve this. The learning and teaching strategy for the course affords appropriate teaching styles and learning opportunities for students.

There are some fails within modules and some students who need to resit modules. However, I do not think this is a reflection of the teaching because generally engagement is high and students appear motivated and enjoy tasks eg presentations, micro – teaching and posters. Also, there is a good spread of pass grades which indicates good teaching with students building on their feedback from Part 1 of assignments.

It would be helpful to see some module evaluations to see at first hand how the students perceive the teaching.

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

The degree offers exploration of a range of interesting topics which are of benefit to practice. This allows for students to understand the established principles in the field. Students have chosen current practice issues to explore within their assignments and learning and work/employment is closely interlinked. The design of the curriculum enables students to link theory to practice and to develop clear progression from level 4 to 5.

Reading lists could be updated, particularly within the Safeguarding and Leadership modules which could use more current texts and reports to ensure currency within the modules. I have made some suggestions which the team may wish to consider.

The handbooks are clear and informative. The assessment criteria are clearly laid out for students and the curriculum learning made evident.

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

(i) design and structure

The arrangement of having two tasks within modules is helpful to students as they are able to use their feedback to improve their performance on Task 2. A range of assessments allow students to present their work in different formats eg posters, presentations, micro teaching sessions. This allows for student flexibility in engaging with the learning and in allowing students to demonstrate their strengths and build confidence.

Assignments are well spaced out throughout the academic year which is helpful for busy practitioners.

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

Learning outcomes provide plenty of scope for students to choose relevant topics to their practice and to consider these appreciatively to understand what works and why it works as well as considering how to develop within their practice. Grading and feedback are

securely linked to Learning Outcomes.

(iii) marking

Feedback is fair and consistent, and helpful guidance given to all students on the scripts and overall feedback. Students who have failed are given comprehensive feedback on how to improve and there are pointers for improvement on all work including highly graded work. Grades are awarded fairly, and a robust system of moderation is in place.

Feedback to the students could be proofread for minor errors as this is a role model for students proofreading their own work.

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.

The students develop a portfolio of practice which provides a record of their achievement and learning and helps them to look towards future graduate employability. This is enhanced by examining and analysing job roles. Practice tasks are embedded within all modules. The subjects studied are in line with the needs of employers in the sector which give students transferable skills within the sector and beyond.

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

The Exam Board was held online as well as face to face due to the current pandemic. It was well organised and professional, and I was provided with all relevant materials in advance. It is a pleasure to attend this exam board as I always gain some learning from it.

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

YES

If no, please comment

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.

12. Any other comments

This is my final year of External Examining for the university, and I would like to express my thanks to the team and the faculty for welcoming me into this role. I would also like to pass on to the students my congratulations for their hard work this year and wish them all the best in their future careers.

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

Signed:	R.Walker
Date:	25.6.21