

## Clinical And Applied Sciences

### Postgraduate

- MSABR Applied Biomedicl Sci Research(TP)
- MSBIS Biomedical Science(TP)
- MSMBC Medical Biochemistry(TP)
- MSMBL Medical Microbiology(TP)

Please indicate, below, whether you agree with the statements about the threshold standards of Leeds Beckett University's awards, student achievement and the conduct of the University's assessment processes, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements. Please also list any shortcomings and areas for commendation. You should expand on any issues you mention here in the main report. If any boxes are ticked "No" the Dean of School or nominee will be alerted and will oversee the response from the Course Director.

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#### Standards Set

	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/awards meet with the requirements of the relevant National Qualifications Statement's."	X	

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

#### Student achievement

	Yes	No	N/A*
"In my view, students' who have been awarded qualifications have had the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar." *Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this statement, please note here:	X		

Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

## Conduct of process

	Yes	No
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are reliable, rigorous and fairly conducted."	X	

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

## Actions from last year's report

(This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time)

Yes

## Areas of good practice/commendation

Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment:

Thank you to both academic and administrative staff for managing to get marks and External Examiner packs ready for the PAB. Given that the timetable set by the University for completion of assessment marking and submission of marks was especially demanding this year, this is an impressive achievement!

1. Blackboard sites appear to have a more consistent format than previously;
2. Module handbooks are uniformly excellent, with comprehensive and timely information for students.
3. Staff have clearly worked hard in order to meet extended assessment deadlines.

## Main report

In this section you are asked to describe more fully how the University has or has not maintained threshold academic standards and the quality of the student experience in relation to the course(s) for which you are the external examiner, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements.

**Please complete all sections of the form fully and where not applicable please state N/A. Where applicable please also complete the sections for any collaborative provision sampled.**

If you are an external examiner for any of the University's Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes (HND/HNC level) provision, please also complete the section on page 9 sections l, m and n entitled "for External Examiners Associated with Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes."

## Professional Body Requirements

	Yes	No	N/A*
"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met. *Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.	X		

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).

By necessity as a result of the CV-19 situation affecting the entire HE sector, the PAB was conducted remotely, with participants attending using the Skype platform. However, the PAB duration was excessive in my view (approximately five hours of near continuous contact), with much of the pre-board business that might usually be conducted prior to the event itself instead being carried out in real time. This was emphatically not the fault of LBU staff (either academic or administrative), but was due to the extremely tight marking turnaround times imposed upon LBU staff by the University. With these caveats in clear view, the conduct of the PAB itself was satisfactory, and due consideration was given to the performances of individual candidates. However, I felt that the format of the board reports could potentially be improved to aid perusal of student's details. The font size employed (clearly for reasons of space / amount of paperwork) was rather small, and therefore quite difficult to follow at times. Otherwise, the conduct of the board was appropriate, and the best compromise available under difficult circumstances.

(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.)

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

Student attainment metrics, which in general were readily accessible from the available documentation, appear consistent with sector averages by level. However, I have some reservations regarding an aspect of current LB academic regulations / procedures that I will expand upon in section (j). What became fairly obvious was that students who performed poorly across modules were invariably those who were also attending sporadically. Again, this is consistent with observations I made in 2018/19.

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

Staff were able to assess these aspects of student performance, due to an effective assessment strategy being in place. In most cases, module documentation was available for external examiners to peruse, although end of module feedback was largely absent from most sites, as were some marksheets prior to the date of the PAB. It was a pity also, that the external examiner team were unable to meet with any student representatives this year, and it was felt that staff may have made provision to arrange a virtual online meeting between the various parties. It was therefore not possible to reconcile the available performance metrics with actual testimony of current student experience. In mitigation, the significant disruption to the conduct of the academic year for all concerned may have made this more difficult to arrange in a timely fashion.

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

In all cases, I received advance sight of draft examination papers, and all modules had detailed information regarding coursework assessment diets, etc. Double marking / moderation – ranged from excellent to sparse/absent with regard to some module packs I viewed. Seems to lack a consistent approach module to module.

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

All modules I was asked to view appear to be excellently conceived, adequately resourced and academically level appropriate. Module marks (where readily available) covered the whole range available. The degree programmes themselves are well designed in order to cater for the needs of both graduates and potential industrial / healthcare partners.

(g) Comments on the use of My Beckett (Virtual Learning Environment) within the course (if applicable).

I felt that real progress had continued to be made this session, with respect to the consistency, accessibility and utility of most Blackboard module sites. In the vast majority of cases, a standard format has been adopted, with a predictable array of module documents readily available to students and external examiners alike. As has already been stated though, not all required documentation was available to external examiners prior to the PAB, with a few resources only being uploaded at the last minute, thereby not affording the external examiner team sufficient time to examine materials prior to the PAB. Again, mitigation should be considered here given the exceptionally difficult circumstances staff were working under this session.

(h) Module content, consistency of modules and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes. (You may be asked by your School to provide detailed comments on the modules that you examine.)

Specific modules I was asked to view, where materials were all, or partially available prior to the PAB:

Preparation for Research Project MEDS-760

Both Module handbook and separate assignment brief documents were excellent – uniformly informative and comprehensive.

The Module leader (ML) provided separate assessment overview and ML report documents. Module metrics were available:

Mean=64.6%, SD=10.9, N=37 registered, Students scoring >70%=14. 18/19 stats: Mean=57%, SD=14.9, N=9, Students scoring >70%=2.

COVID-19 impact N/A since module ran semester 1 only. Report contained some useful reflective information.

ML provided module evaluation form examples from students – the first I have seen out of all packs viewed so far.

Sample courseworks were available in the EE pack. Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to see any evidence of marking or feedback, presumably as a result of conversion of Turnitin Studio docs to .pdf.

## Blood Science MEDS – 762

Module handbook is a very well presented and extensive document, detailing all necessary information for students.

External examiner pack was available and contained a portfolio marking scheme, ML report, handbook, mark sheet and examples of moderated work. Excellent.

Module metrics were available: Mean=64%, SD=13 (n=12). Attendance estimated at 75% overall.

ML also states that whilst module feedback forms were collected, these were inaccessible at the time of reporting. Examples of second marked portfolios were available for me to examine, and there was good evidence of moderation having been carried out.

## Research Project MEDS-763

This module had an external examiner area designated, but no information was available or visible at the time of viewing.

## Professional Development – BIOS-707

This module did not appear to have an external examiner pack available or visible.

## Protein Science – BIOS-713

This module did not appear to have an external examiner pack available or visible.

## IM Project Module – MEDS-705

Module handbook is concise and informative, clearly detailing module syllabus week by week, assessment diet and how feedback may be accessed and reviewed.

Mean=72% (n=1) 18/19 for comparison: Mean=57%, SD=9

ML report shows that three students were eligible to submit, but only one did (at least by the date of the PAB).

## Advanced Medical Genetics – BIOS-712

Module handbook is concise and informative, clearly detailing module syllabus week by week, assessment diet and how feedback may be accessed and reviewed.

Assessment briefing document was comprehensive and presented clear instructions for students. 3000 word literature review assignment on a genetic disorder of the students' choice, comprising 100% of module mark.

17/31 students didn't submit [55%] COVID-19 impact??

Module metrics document records an apparent disparity here – 26 eligible students, with 14 submissions and 12 non submissions, yet summary of marks document lists 31 students and 17 non submissions.

Mean=66.5%, SD=10.91, Max=79%, Min=41%.

ML report form was available. Again, some disparities. ML reports 30 enrolled students, but only 26 seem to appear in the separate module metrics document. ML reports poor levels of engagement with module content.

19/20 vs 18/19 outcomes: 66.5% vs 59.3 [SD around 10.5 in both cases; 11% increase in mean mark]  
Examples of literature reviews: Feedback given on drafts was universally extensive and excellent. Feedback and marking on examples I saw seems consistent and fair. However, no evidence or documentation of any double marking or moderation on any of the samples I viewed.

(i) Areas of student/staff engagement in teaching and learning, scholarship, research or professional practice.

Some modules, where information is readily available, show evidence of flipped classroom teaching approaches.

(j) The University welcomes external examiners' comments on its 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.

I have detailed my concerns regarding the use of a 'rounding up' algorithm that the Records System appears to apply to module marks at 58% and above for UG students in past reports. However, the significantly smaller number of PG vs UG students makes this less of an issue here in my view.

(k) Collaborative Provision: please include here any comments you wish to make on elements of collaborative provision for which you have responsibility (in addition to those you may have indicated previously in this report).

N/A