

## BA (Hons) Childhood Studies 2017/18

### External Examiner's report summary

Please indicate in the relevant boxes 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.

Standards set		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/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 achievement			
	Yes	No	N/A *
"In my view, students' achievement is comparable with similar course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar."	x		
Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision.			
* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this please indicate here.			
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.			

Conduct of processes		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are 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.		

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Areas of good practice
Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.
<p><b>I feel this year has produced a fantastic array of modules for the Childhood Studies Programme, up-to-date, fresh and taught to a very high standard by a dedicated group of staff who should be very proud of their achievements. Through this, students are being provided with a very rich and rewarding learning experience.</b></p> <p><b>I was able to access all marks, module guides, samples quickly and effectively from the Leeds Beckett Blackboard site and would also like to thank staff for this.</b></p> <p><b>The assessments were wide-ranging and included some very innovative methods of assessment, which encouraged students to engage and produce work of a very high standard.</b></p> <p><b>The feedback staff give on this course has always been impressive since becoming an external, especially the quality. I feel this is a very distinguishing part of this degree programme. Not only is it critical, thorough and considerately worded it is also replete with suggestions for refining and improving future pieces of work. These comments are also very <i>personal</i>, staff <i>know</i> their students and should be commended for this.</b></p> <p><b>In terms of marking, this was in-line with the assessment criteria set and was consistent and fair across the modules moderated.</b></p>

## 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			
"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met.  <i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A *</b>
			<b>X</b>
<i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i>			

<b>(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).</b>
<p><b>Unfortunately, due to demands from my own university I was unable to attend either board this year. However, academic and administrative preparation has been exemplary and throughout the year I have had contact with the course leader, staff and the administrative team. Work for moderation has been sent in very good time and has also included detailed guidance and all the necessary paperwork.</b></p>

<b>(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.)</b>
<p><b>No action was required from last year's report.</b></p>

<b>(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.</b>
<p><b>I have experience of similar programmes within my own, and other, universities. On this basis, I am confident that the modules I have seen set standards for student achievement that are comparable with those in other HEIs.</b></p>

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

Having moderated several modules it became quickly obvious that the marking criteria was applied consistently across the modules and marking itself was fair, consistent and very clearly moderated. Students who demonstrated they had engaged with the module and the modules' learning outcomes produced some incredible work. They demonstrated a variety of skills which every institution wants their students to possess. For example, excellent academic skills; theoretical astuteness and the ability to apply their learning to practical real-life examples. Students who did not engage so fully with the modules' learning outcomes, did not do quite so well in relation to those with higher marks.

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

I am still very impressed by range of innovative assessments offered to students on this course. The assessments provided are advanced, pioneering in some cases, and very up-to-date. Staff clearly spend a considerable amount of time thinking through the entire process of 'assessments' when actually setting the work. The marking criteria across all of the modules moderated was thorough, and marking was applied consistently and fairly.

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

The BA Childhood Studies teaching team is continually working to improve the degree course for students – not just at one point of the year as with many university course, but across the year as things happen to warrant changes. The curriculum is up-to-date both in terms of its topicality and in relation to the sector-wide emphasis given to supporting independent learning and building employability. The investment in this degree by academic staff demonstrates real commitment – as such, it is important that the BA Childhood Studies degree continues to be effectively resourced and staffed, in order for staff to maintain the excellent standards outlined in this report.

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

N/A

(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.)

This year I moderated a number of modules from levels 5 & 6 all of which were contemporary, exciting, interesting and challenging for students. As with last year, all module booklets were well-produced, thorough and clearly outline learning outcomes for students to engage with. In all cases, there was explicit instructions of what students were expected to undertake, as well as detailed information on how this should be done. The teaching team should be very proud of the cohesive nature of the course, which flourishes amid independent yet interrelated and up-to-date modules. This is again demonstrated most clearly in the excellent work produced in the Major Independent Study.

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

**I have already commented at the beginning of this report at how impressed I was with feedback to students from staff. What comes across from staff is the truly personal relationship they have with students across all modules at all levels – they know their students and clearly demonstrate staff/student engagement.**

**(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 no concerns with the BA Childhood Studies programme but am keen to stress the need for continued effective resourcing of this exemplary degree.**

**(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**

**External Examiners' Report Checklist**

**Please comment for all boxes**

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

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

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

<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	(i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?	X		
	(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?			
<b>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:</b>				
<p>a) <b>Samples should be determined by a square root of cohort size, no smaller than 6, no larger than 15. However it should be borne in mind that not all work is assessed in a way that makes a square root sample possible and allowance should be made. For example in subjects such as the performing arts where there may be a requirement for an external to come and view a performance instead, or to visit the exhibition of art work.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Samples to include all classification categories, and it is helpful to concentrate around the boundaries to include some fails.</b></p> <p>c) <b>Samples to consist of internally moderated work, clearly evidencing the moderation process.</b></p>				
b.	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	X		
c.	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	X		

<b>Dissertations/project reports</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?	X		
b.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?	X		

<b>Coursework/continuously assessed work</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?	X		
b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	X		

<b>Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?	X		

<b>Module Board/Progression and Award Boards</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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 Module Board/Progression and Award Boards?			X