

BA (Hons) Primary Education leading to QTS 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.”	/	
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.”	/		
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.”	/	
If your answer is ‘no’, please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.		

Areas of good practice
Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.

I have found the teaching, learning and assessment to be both creative in its approach and inclusive in its intent which allows students to be assessed holistically. Students are assessed in a wide variety of ways and so there is a wider emphasis than the development of skill in academic writing. These assessments often embrace ICT. Modules I looked at included powerpoint presentation, scrapbooks, portfolio, essay, interview, video etc. Some of these require students to work collaboratively. There are strong links to practice in all of the assignments allowing students to synthesise, evaluate and reflect on current policy, research, theory and practice. As such students are developing graduate attributes and key skills which they will need as teachers in order to be informed, critically aware, reflective and reflexive practitioners.

The new modules at level 5 will support the students in the process of research required for dissertations. They are designed to develop student's analytical skills in both academic reading and interrogation of practice. Students will also have gained experience of selecting an appropriate research question and area to study.

There are examples of sound feedback practice and this is recognised as a process rather than a one off event. In the best examples, feedback given supports students in recognising their areas of strength and provides explicit pointers on how to develop their future work. This is provided for all students even in the higher grade ranges. The best feedback examples include comments on academic writing and referencing and links are made to materials to support student development in these areas.

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>	Yes	No	N/A *
	/		
<i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i>			

(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).
I attended the MAB. This was well organised by admin and chaired in accordance with regulations. Due regard was given to the process of assessment. Module leaders confirmed the accuracy of the marks and gave a brief overview of key issues and standardisation/moderation processes.

(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.
The overall performance of students at all the levels I examined was comparable to the work of students at the same level in other institutions. It was pleasing to see the full range of marks awarded, including the higher grade range. Work in this higher range was excellent in the level of reflection and depth of reading and synthesis of reading, practice and policy. Samples provided were compiled of the different grade boundaries and there were clear differences in the grading and feedback to students indicated why the work was within the grade boundary as well as how the student could make progress. The personal tutorial system is a strength of the programme and supports students in understanding their feedback and in action planning for development. It would be interesting to hear from students how they have found the process.

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

In the samples I have seen the students demonstrated high levels of engagement with the tasks set. There was reference to a wide and appropriate range of reading and students were knowledgeable regarding current policy and curriculum as well as historical contexts. As assessments all had an element of practice this allowed students to apply their knowledge and exemplify and make links to between theory, policy and practice. There was excellent coverage across subjects in the curriculum including the Foundation subjects. Knowledge about inclusive practice and demonstration of inclusive intent was evident in many assignments, not just the assignments in the area of SEND and inclusion. This will stand students in good stead in the classroom.

Core assignments require students to critically analyse rationales and ideologies which impact on practice and to critically reflect on their own practice. The new programme design means that students will revisit core subjects in their final year. Given the emphasis in school on the core subjects this is a sound idea which will support students in their continued development of subject knowledge per se and subject knowledge for teaching. It would be useful to sample the core files which students produce in order to further comment on their depth of subject knowledge.

In common with other institutions, some students obviously struggled with the rigours of academic writing and referencing but in-text feedback as well as final comments helped to address these points. The tutorial system will really help students in understanding their feedback and help them to understand what they need to do to continue to develop. This should include signposting of appropriate resources and sources of support.

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

There was clear alignment of module learning outcomes and the design of assessments. Student module information is explicit and jargon free. There are clear links to the Teachers' Standards. Most assessments had a part A and B and these were well thought out to provide balance and to complement each other. Marking is very thorough and module reports contain details of standardisation and moderation processes.

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

Students appear to be clear about the expectations for the assessment through explicit assignment briefings and detail in module handbooks is clear. Students would appear to have sufficient teaching time to cover the necessary content. Hours for core and foundation subjects allow the subjects to be covered in breadth and depth. Booklists and resources are current.

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

(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.)

I have examined a range of modules and have provided individual feedback on the required Module reporting form. In general the modules fit closely together and form a well thought out and coherent whole. The second year modules are new modules and their design is such that they should impact strongly on student preparedness for the new research based dissertation. It will be interesting to compare how the new programme and research based rather than desk based dissertation compares.

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

Staff are all experts in their respective fields and are research active. There is joint engagement in taking practice out to schools increasingly and involving teachers in the delivery of the programme which gives currency and credibility.

(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.

(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).

External Examiners' Report Checklist

Please comment for all boxes

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

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

Marking Examination Scripts				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?			/
	(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?			/
<p>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:</p> <p>a) 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.</p> <p>b) Samples to include all classification categories, and it is helpful to concentrate around the boundaries to include some fails.</p> <p>c) Samples to consist of internally moderated work, clearly evidencing the moderation process.</p>				
b.	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	/		
c.	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	/		

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

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

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

Module Board/Progression and Award Boards				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you able to attend the meetings?	/		
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?	/		
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Module Board/Progression and Award Boards?	/		