External Examiner's report summary

School of Health And Community Studies

Postgraduate

- MSPHM Public Health Promo (30M PT)
- PHHPC Public Health - Health Promo
- PHHPD Public Health - Health Promo
- PHHPM Pub Hlth-Hlth Pro(12MFT/30MPT) (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:

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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:
In line with my comments from last year, the content of the MSc Public Health / Health Promotion programmes continues to retain currency across diverse health challenges. The breadth of the curriculum is at the cutting edge of public health and health promotion practice and thinking, and graduates from this programme will be well prepared to operate in a complex, ethically challenging and rapidly changing environment. Examples of good practice include: - The use of exemplar assessments to support students to understand the range of scope of assessments and assessment decisions is very good practice (in CRN11658). - The clear alignment of assessments across modules to develop and reinforce skills of reflective practice. - The range of options available for assessments within a module, which allows the students to work towards building on their strengths. - The use of group work has been particularly successful for the three cohorts, with seamless group work in particular being carried out by the distance learning students.

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

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	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 courseplease indicate here.			
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).

Whist physical attendance at the Progression and Award Boards has been disrupted towards the end of this year due to the COVID19 pandemic, the team have worked hard to ensure that all documents have been available remotely and in advance of board meetings. The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board has been in-line with Leeds Beckett University regulations. Assessment and awarding decisions have been made and recorded accurately, in line with regulations.

(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.

Across all of the MSc programmes, the students' performance has been comparable with those of work in other institutions.

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

Across all of the postgraduate programmes, the teaching and assessment methods allow for differentiated learning. It seemed to be a common theme with this years' cohort that there was a difference in the level of criticality between the students being taught (either face-to-face or distance) in the UK, and those in the Ghana cohort.

The team are to be commended for their support for the breadth and currency of topics that students undertake for their dissertations. I would encourage a more standardized approach to the inclusion of 'limitations' into dissertations however, as this will enhance criticality.

With regards to individual modules, I have again provided detailed feedback on each module that I reviewed, to the module team.

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

The variety of learning tasks, delivery methods and assessment tasks is diverse and innovative, supporting students to develop cross-modular learning, and subject specific as well as transferable skills. The marking decisions show strong consistency across the three cohorts, and the process for module moderation and standardisation of marking decisions is transparent.

There is variability in the level of detail on assessment marking criteria, with some modules providing grade specific criteria and others providing general criteria overall. This seems to be particularly relevant to the dissertation module. I would encourage the development of a differentiated marking / assessment template for the dissertation module to enable students to clearly differentiate between grades. The current assessment guidance is almost a tick list of what should be included, rather than a guide towards differentiated grading.

The module handbooks are clearly structured, but there are some modules where the assessment tasks and weightings are incorrect in the handbook. In my institution, the module handbooks are reviewed by the module moderator/second marker before being distributed for students and this helps to ensure that the information in the handbooks is correct. This could be something that the team could introduce to prevent confusing information being provided to students.

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

It is clear that the curriculum, teaching and resourcing of the programme supports students learning and achievement, and enables differentiation of performance. In feedback on assessments, students are guided toward improving their critical appraisal skills for higher marks but it would be useful for the team to look at how to build in the development of these skills more explicitly into the learning content and activities. The lower levels of criticality seen in some of the Distance Learning students' work across multiple modules seems to indicate that this aspect could be integrated more strongly into the learning for this cohort.

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

The VLE is used effectively by the team to support both face-to-face and distance learning students. However, a common theme across both face-to-face and distance learning cohorts seemed to be a lack of tutor feedback on student forum posts. Whilst face-to-face teaching mitigates against this, the engagement of the distance learning and Ghana students in discussion fora decreased markedly as the module progressed. At the time of writing this report, there was only one tutor completed module evaluation to review, which provided a clear consideration of these issues. Given the lower general performance of some of the distance and Ghanaian students in particular, it would be worth considering within the module review process, how feedback from forum posts could enhance student learning.

Clearer signposting for External Examiners as to where to find students’ work for modules which run over a number of years (such as the Research and Practice Development modules) would make the EE process more time efficient.

(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.)

Detailed feedback on every module has been provided to each module team. Across all of the modules, there was clear consistency of module assessment decisions in line with module learning outcomes, and consistency of assessment decisions across both face-to-face and distance learning students in the same module. Module delivery methods varied according to the needs and location of the cohorts, and there were some excellent video and lecture resources prepared for the distance learning students.

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

The programme is strongly practically focused and for both DL and F2F students across all three cohorts, the assessment tasks give opportunity for developing their professional practice. The learning and teaching across the programme integrates staff research and professional practice well.

(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.

It is good to see that the University is revising the pass threshold for the MSc programmes. This will bring Leeds Beckett University more into line with other HEI's in this respect. Given the challenges of face-to-face working this year, it is appropriate that the introduction of this new threshold has been delayed until the 2021 academic year. This move does provide a positive opportunity for the MSc programme teams to review their assessment criteria overall.

(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).