

Open University Validation Partnerships

External Examiner report template

An electronic copy of this report should be sent to:

ouvp-external-examiners@open.ac.uk

Or, a signed hard copy sent to:

The Director, OUVV, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, United Kingdom.

You should also submit a copy of this report to the institution.

Section A: General information

Institution:	Leeds City College
Programme:	FD Social Care (Adult and Community) BA (Hons) Health and Social Care
Subject examined:	Foundation Degree Modules: Leadership and Management Supporting Adults with Specific Needs Social Enterprise BA (Hons) Top-Up: Dissertation Critical Reflection on Practice

Name of examiner:	Dr Luke Cartwright
Address:	
E-mail:	
Current year of appointment	I have been appointed to cover the unexpected absence of the current external examiner. My period of tenure started 18th June 2020 and will end 31st July 2020.

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 to include confirmation that sufficient evidence was received to enable your role to be fulfilled.
I was appointed at short notice to cover an unexpected external examiner absence. However, I have found contact with the OU to be efficient and all my questions have been addressed promptly. Furthermore, Leeds City College (LCC) have provided access to the material needed to undertake the task.
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 standards are appropriate; however, student performance is weaker than other similar programmes I have knowledge of. This may reflect the educational background of the students the College recruits. More academic support at level 4 may help improve student achievement at levels 5 and 6.
3. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.
See comments above and detailed comments below.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students
Level 5 Leadership and Management: 3 of the 6 students submitting work to this module received marks in the 40s. Paper 126038873 did not have any intext citations (there is a reference list). At level 5 I would have expected this paper to be a fail. It was passed at 42. Paper 126861020 has several large sections that appear to be direct quotations. The paper was awarded a pass at 45. Again, this seems rather generous. Paper 126017854 another weak submission. Quality of sources very poor.

Level 5

Leadership and Management:

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Paper 125922530 – I was surprised this was awarded a mark of 58. As with the other papers specifically commented on here the quality of sources and referencing was very poor. I do believe the paper merits a pass but not a mark of 58.

The marking of this module appears to be overly generous. Furthermore, by level 5 students should have learned how to identify good quality source material and how to correctly reference their work. This does not appear to be the case with this small group of students.

Supporting Adults with Specific Needs:

I could not access paper 126904532

Students offered some good reflections. This type of assessment (a reflection) appears to suit this cohorts' strengths as it requires a less scholarly approach; however, referencing and choice of source material is still poor.

Social Enterprise:

The PowerPoint presentations I was able to view were well thought through and it is clear that students have spent time putting the presentations together. Again this is an assessment strategy that appears to suit this cohort as it is less academically demanding.

General Comments – Level 5

Overall, the work I have reviewed for the level 5 modules is generally weak with the main problem areas being written expression, referencing and choice of source material.

Recommendation

I would suggest more work is done with students at level 4 so that they are fully prepared for the demands of level 5. Students are not using peer reviewed journals as frequently as would be expected for level 5. This may reflect a lack of resources available from the College and/or that lecturers are not stressing the need for students to draw on this type of evidence in their work.

Level 6

Critical Reflections on Practice:

1 student failed task 1 and 4 (of 7) were awarded marks in the 40s. These are much lower marks than I would expect of level 6 students. In task 2 students appear to have performed better (4 papers marked in the 50s and 3 in the 60s). However, I do not understand why students completed two assessments for this module. The work submitted for each assessment appeared to be very similar.

Dissertation:

Paper 129911942: The student appears to have used a personal email address (see page 55 & 51) on the ethics paperwork and on the documents offered to potential research participants. If this is the case it is a significant breach of normal research conventions. It may also need to be reported to the student's employer as the research appears to have

been conducted at the student's place of work. Generally, social care employers prohibit employees from sharing personal contact information with service users. **This needs to be investigated.**

Papers 129065104 and 129065408 also have yahoo.com email address on the ethics paperwork.

I am rather alarmed that students may have given personal email addresses to prospective research participants. It is accepted custom and practice for all research related correspondence and data to be managed through the research institutions systems. Furthermore, by using personal email addresses students may also have breached their employment contract. The College should review all the paperwork for this group of students to establish whether a problem exists and the extent of any problem.

If it is established that these students have used personal email addresses then I would strongly urge the College to ensure that academic staff offer more robust research training before students are allowed into the field to gather data. The College will also need to review the cases where there has been a breach of rules and take action to protect the students involved and ensure no members of the public have been negatively impacted in anyway. The College may also want to review the training given to academics with responsibility for granting ethical approval for research.

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

As I have only reviewed 5 modules it is difficult to comment on teaching quality. Furthermore, the cohorts are very small and this will impact on the grade profile.

Additionally, overall student performance is impacted by issues such as educational attainment at school and in post 16 provision.

Generally, the students are weak performing poorly in areas such as written expression, referencing and the ability to research and find appropriate sources.

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

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

(i) design and structure

A good range of assessments have been used that enable students to meet the specified learning outcomes. Students perform better in the less academically demanding assessments.

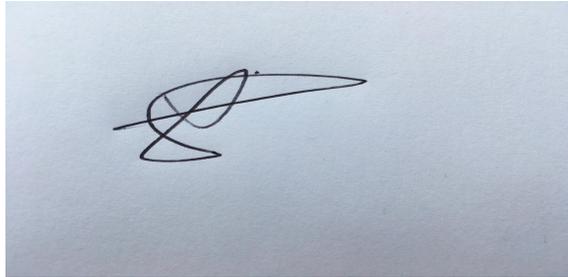
(ii) relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme
The assessment strategies being utilised connect well to the stated objectives and learning outcomes of the modules.
(iii) marking to include comments on whether marking scheme / grading criteria has been consistently applied
The marking for the Leadership and Management module appears rather generous but the other modules are marked consistently and the grading criteria has been applied appropriately.
8. Where the programme has specific work-related learning outcomes (e.g. Apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees) please comment on the assessment and achievement of these outcomes, including employers' involvement where relevant.
N/A
9. The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards, briefing of external examiners, access of external examiners to essential materials, etc.
10. Have all the issues identified in your previous report been addressed by the institution?
I was appointed external examiner at short notice in March 2019 but do not recall being sent any conformation that the areas identified for action had been dealt with.
If no, please comment
It is customary for institutions to respond to external examiner reports. Perhaps this did not happen last year as I was an emergency appointment.
11. 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, reliable and transparent across the provision. <i>(For those with responsibility across the whole programme or for chief external examiners – if in doubt please check with the appointing institution)</i>
As I only reviewed 5 modules (three at level 5 and two at level 6) I am not qualified to respond to this question.

12. Any other comments

Please ensure I am informed of the outcome of the investigate into the use of personal email addresses and of the action take by the College to rectify any problems identified.

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

Signed:

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to be a cursive name.

Date:

June 2020