



The Open
University

Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP)

External Examiner report template

An electronic copy of this report should be sent to:

cicp-external-examiners@open.ac.uk

Or, a signed hard copy sent to:

The Director, CICP, 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:	PGCE/Cert Ed in Post-16 Education and Training
Subject examined:	Special Educational Needs
Name of examiner:	Dr Andrew Smith (The University of Northampton)
Address:	
E-mail:	
Current year of appointment	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.
A range of student assignment/work was provided across L5 and L6 modules – this provided a detailed overview of the pathway.
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 set are appropriate for the award element: Compared against L5 and L6 modules/programme specifications on specialist BA Hons programmes of study (SEND & Inclusion) and FdA programmes of study (FdA SEN and FdA Learning & Teaching) in two other HEIs.
3. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.
There was a comparable 'spectrum' of work which is comparable with student work on other programmes of study.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of the students
Strengths: using theory to underpin practice; developing strong 'reflective practitioner' skills; employing effective teaching and learning strategies. Weaknesses: some students found establishing an 'academic writing style' difficult along with engaging a critical lens on literature/sources (although, as last year, this isn't a weakness as such because there was evidence of this evolving across the levels).
5. The quality of teaching and learning, as indicated by student performance
This is good. The quality of student work and the grades awarded, module progression is and within the merit/distinction grade boundaries.
6. The quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources
The curriculum presents a very good balance between the work-based/practical, the academic/theoretical and legislative. Course materials/resources are well suited to the programme of study. The difficulties with securing and managing suitable placements is acknowledged and understood (this is a difficulty which many colleges and universities

face). Excellent arrangements and amendments have been made in the light of the current Covid-19 situation in order that students are not disadvantaged.

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

(i) design and structure

Assessments are carefully planned and reflect the content of the module. Practical/work-based assessments are very well set up and enable every student to engage to the best of their ability and knowledge. All assignments have a detailed brief, careful links to the module learning outcomes/objectives, have a clear assessment rubric and links to reading lists.

(ii) relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme

Ref: my commentary in 7 (i) above. Links to objectives and module LOs are made very clear.

(iii) marking

This remains exemplary. It is detailed, informative, lucid/accessible and honest. Trainees are informed on what they did well (and why) and specific instruction on what they need to do to improve. Marking rubrics are used in addition to the detailed commentary and annotations on trainee texts. Trainee Observation feedback is strong. I particularly like the formal references to formative feedback made in the assignment briefs/module information.

8. Where the programme has specific work-related learning outcomes (e.g. Foundation Degrees) please comment on the assessment and achievement of these outcomes, including employers' involvement where relevant.

The trainees produce work-based portfolios of evidence across several modules. These are (in the main) carefully completed, detailing the practical work (teaching, teaching preparation, resources etc.) accomplished during placements. Generally, the trainee portfolios show significant levels of reflection and self-evaluation leading to the development of their teaching skills/practices and knowledge of learning and teaching within the field of SEND with a keen understanding of learner needs. For the work-based elements of the programme of study the Covid-19 special arrangements have worked well, no student appeared to be disadvantaged due to the national situation.

9. The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards, briefing of external examiners, access of external examiners to essential materials, etc.

As always, this was efficient, friendly, informative and transparent/honest. All materials were provided in a timely and supportive manner. For the June 2020 board this was completed through an on-line synchronous process which worked well.

10. Have all the issues identified in your previous report been addressed by the institution?

Yes

If no, please comment

NA

11. (For chief external examiners or those with responsibility for the whole programme – if in doubt please check with the appointing institution)

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 and sound across the provision.

NA

12. Any other comments

General Points:

(1) This is a good specialist programme pathway which contains a significant amount of pertinent subject material combined with a strong practical/work-based underpinning. The specialist staff responsible for tutoring/delivering the programme are very qualified/experienced and clearly work well as a dedicated team. Their feedback on student scripts remains exemplary in all aspects.

(2) A smaller sample for my consideration was sent to me for the June 2020 Board. This was fine as I did have the opportunity to see a larger number of student scripts prior to my attendance, in person, at the 4th March Board.

(3) Detailed EE feedback (per module) and recommendations:

Year 2 Modules:

Pedagogy & Practice

Teaching SEN in Education & training Sector: Curriculum & Cultural Context.

Task 1: Research Study (100% weighting; 5000 words)

Assessor: Karen Banks

Moderator: Dr Liz Newton

EE Commentary:

- Good evidence is presented in regard to robust and detailed moderation protocols and practices.
- Detailed and lucid module specification with clearly defined learning outcomes and assignment requirements.
- I read the assignment feedback provided for each student on Turnitin and found it to be consistently detailed and supportive – clearly explaining what each student did well and providing useful advice/guidance on how to improve/develop carefully targeted areas. This remains a key strength of this module.
- Student Scripts: Three scripts were examined. In all of them the students exhibited good/sound and lucid academic writing skills, engagement with a range of relevant texts/sources and the confidence to engage critically/reflectively on their chosen areas for research. The grades awarded **are entirely appropriate/fair.**

Recommendations for this module

- (i) To add the NASEN journal '*Support for Learning*' to the module reading list (it provides a good 'companion' to NASEN's BJSE and will complement the other texts on the list).

- (ii) Although the learning outcomes are available in assignment briefs and in the module booklet/module specs, Turnitin does allow for a rubric to be added, so perhaps the LOs could be slightly re-modelled to form such a rubric which can be used to complement the written feedback (I couldn't find one on the Turnitin feedback ...although it could be my 'ham-fisted' use of the Leeds City College platform and it does exist).

The Pedagogy and Practice of Specific Educational Needs (SEN)

Teaching and Learning

Task 1: Teaching Practice Portfolio (100% weighting; 5000 words)

Assessor: Karen Banks

Moderator; Dr Liz Newton

EE Commentary:

- Excellent module handbook and assessment/portfolio guidance. This contains comprehensive, systematic and clear guidance and instruction on the nature of the module, the requirements of the work-based practice, the learning objectives, teaching schedule and a framework for the electronic portfolio/what to include and how to set it all out.
- Portfolio feedback is excellent – detailed, informative, systematically/clearly presented, carefully targeted in terms of presenting areas for development, linked to the module LOs and very supportive.
- Student scripts: three were examined...two are sound/good and the third provides an excellent exemplar for the portfolio. All the students engaged in a reflective manner and were honest in their assessments/reviews and critical commentaries. Their engagement in practice comes through very well...as does their enjoyment in teaching.

Recommendations for this module

- (i) As this is quite a complex assignment based on practice and consisting of a number of inter-linked 'parts' I am unsure if the 5000 words allocated to it is an 'actual' or 'equivalent' word limit. May I recommend that, due to this complexity, the word limit be amended to 5000 words 'equivalence' thus providing some additional flexibility for the students?

Overall Comments

Thank you for

- Making the whole off-site process of EE in this difficult and bizarre/surreal (Covid-19) 'time' a straightforward one.
- Providing the module information and student scripts in a timely manner.

The validity/integrity of the course remains high (as illustrated by the student engagement and achievement shown in this sample) and is compatible with similar courses in other HEIs. Particular areas of good practice are:

- Guidance/information for students through very well constructed module handbooks and assignment briefs
- Tutor's feedback to students
- Robust moderation
- Relevance of module content

I have already mentioned the potential for including the 'Support for Learning' NASEN journal on module reading lists. You might have already considered these, but students at UoN have found the following publications useful:

Frederickson, N. and Cline, T. (2015) *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity* (3rd edn.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Goepel, J., Scruton, J., and Wheatley, C. (2020) *A Critical Guide to the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 Years* (2015). St Albans: Critical Publishing.

Hodkinson, A. (2016) *Key Issues in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion* (2nd edn.). London: Sage.

Wearmouth, J. (2017) *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Schools: An introduction*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Although all 'schools-orientated' the content is all directly transferrable to the post-16 sector (particularly considering the 'over-lap' in the 14-18 age range who access FE/VET-based provision and the scope of the DfE/DH (2015) Code of Practice 0 to 25).

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

Signed:	
Date:	24.07.2020