
External Examiners' annual report template (Programme Assessment Board)

Purpose of the External Examiner's report

Please read this section before writing your report

External Examiner reports are an integral part of the University's quality monitoring and enhancement process and play an important role in the programme review cycle. External Examiners are required to submit annual written reports.

Reports should be submitted within **four weeks** following the final Programme Assessment Board. Report submission should not be delayed until re-sit boards have taken place.

The report should be linked with programme aims and outcomes, and the assessment criteria for each module, as described in the programme/module handbook(s). Reports should be objective and make positive criticism and/or recommendations where appropriate.

External Examiners' reports are the property of the University. The University will circulate reports as it sees fit, in accordance with legislative requirements. External Examiner reports are public documents, and are seen by students at Programme Voice Group meetings. **Please do not reference individual students and members of staff by name.**

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the University will provide copies of External Examiners' reports to third parties who have made a lawful request. Reports will normally retain External Examiners' names. The University will consider any reasonable request from External Examiners to anonymise their reports. Such a request should be made in writing and submitted with the report.

Full details of the procedures, and the use of the reports is outlined in [LQEH section 4](#).

Submission of the report

Please submit your report via email to the following email address:

externalexaminer@mdx.ac.uk

Your annual fee will be processed once we receive a copy of your annual report.

External Examiner Report – Programme Assessment Board

External Examiner name	Rebecca Larkin
Academic Year (period covered by report)	2024-25
Date report submitted to Externalexaminer@mdx.ac.uk	20/06/2025

Programme(s) reviewed	Master of Education (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Master of Education (Professional Practice in Dyslexia and Literacy) Postgraduate Diploma (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Postgraduate Certificates
Module(s) moderated	Autism Spectrum Conditions Cognition and Learning Dyslexia Professional Report Writing Dyslexia: Leadership and Intervention - Skills & Knowledge Enquiry-based SEND Practice International Award for SEN Coordination National Award for SEN Coordination Psychology for Education Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs Speech, Language and Communication Needs - Skills & Knowledge
Name of Programme Leader/ Module Leader	Katie Hickin
Date(s) of programme assessment board(s) attended	Thursday 5 th June 2025

Programmes/module delivery arrangements – tick all that are applicable	Apprenticeship	
	Hendon Campus	
	Dubai Campus	
	Mauritius campus	
	Collaborative partner:	Yes/ No
	Joint	
	Franchise	
	Validated	

To be completed by all external examiners by ticking the appropriate box:

OVERALL STANDARDS	Yes	No
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1. In your view, are the standards set for the award(s) appropriate for the qualification(s)? <i>For apprenticeship programmes, consider whether they reflect the apprenticeship standard.</i>	x	
2. In your view, are the standards of student performance equivalent to other UK institutions with which you are familiar?	x	

Support for the role of External Examiner	Yes	No
<i>(For new external Examiners)</i> Did you find the induction arrangements effective in helping you understand your role and the University's expectations of you?		
I confirm that the ACEE measures/evidence which form the body of evidence were sufficient for me to provide an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of the programme	x	
The Faculty and Programme Team communicated effectively with me throughout the year	x	
I was given sufficient information concerning my role as an External Examiner	x	
I was given sufficient information concerning the modules for which I am appointed to enable full consideration of delivery, including collaborative partner provision, franchises and overseas campuses, if applicable	x	
Did you receive formal written feedback on your report for the previous academic year? (N/A for EEs completing their first report)	x	
Were you satisfied with the response to the issues raised in your report for the previous academic year?	x	
Comments (if 'no' to any of the above): As an external examiner I would like to thank the team at Real Training for their continued transparency and helpful approach ahead of and during the exam board. I always feel fully informed and I am given extensive access to portfolios; as always it has been a pleasure to review the candidates work and the feedback provided by staff. The data presented in the exam board is always very thorough and thought provoking – it is clear that the team are dedicated to providing a high quality, authentic and supportive learning experience, underpinned by robust quality assurance processes.		

Report

Please use the following headings and guidance notes:

Programme/ Subject design, content and standards

Please comment on;

- the extent to which standards (apprenticeship standards; PSRB requirements; Professional benchmark statements) are appropriate to the qualification, or qualification element under consideration on comparable UK Higher Education programmes
- the curriculum, its aims, content, and development
- Does the course content remain relevant and up to date?
- please comment only on those modules that have strengths, weaknesses or areas of good practice that you would wish to highlight
- Where the programme has a vocational element or link, please comment on the content of the course in terms of preparing students for employment in that sector

This is my third year as external examiner for this suite of courses. I continue to feel that the carefully designed curriculum meets a significant need among educational professionals for professional development in the field of SEN. The resources and approaches used are up to date, and continuously being refined and reflected on by tutors and course leaders. The focus continues to be on developing reflective practitioners who have the advanced skillset needed to deliver positive impact in their settings, and on supporting children with SEN.

In my opinion the role of SENCO and leaders within the special educational needs sector has never been more challenging. These professionals are continually being expected to deliver more with increasingly small real terms resource. These courses provide vital and up to date training that will filter down to colleagues, parents and children themselves.

Student achievement (please avoid reference by name to individual students)

Yes

No

Are you satisfied that the level of student achievement is comparable across all locations of programme delivery (e.g. overseas campuses, franchise programmes)

x

Please comment on:

- standards achieved by students
- student performance in relation to their peers on comparable courses
- student performance in modules taught at overseas campuses (Dubai, Mauritius) and modules on franchised and joint validated programmes at UK and overseas sites
- student performance in relation to clinical/professional practice (if applicable)
- student performance in relation to PSRB requirements (if applicable)
- the effectiveness of employer engagement (if applicable)
- foundation degrees: Are there sufficient and effective opportunities for work-based learning and work-related learning?
- strengths and weaknesses of the cohort
- factors that the External Examiner is aware of that have positively or negatively affected student performance (e.g. resources, field trips etc.)

Once again, I very much enjoyed reviewing the portfolios. There is evidence of high quality work being completed by delegates (students), and the standard is appropriate and comparable to other institutions. Delegate performance in relation to PSRB requirements continues to be taken extremely seriously, carefully considered and reviewed by the course leader. I remain confident that delegates who complete the practice-based elements of these courses are extremely well prepared for the work place with the most up to date teaching and guidance. In previous years I have encouraged the team to use the full range of marks available – especially at the higher end of the scale. It is clear that this has been taken on board, and it is great to see excellent work produced by delegates being recognised and celebrated.		
Assessments: structure, design and marking	Yes	No
I was given the opportunity to see samples of marked work (including written assignments and examination scripts) covering the full range of marks	x	
I saw evidence of internal moderation in the assessment process and confirm it was used effectively and consistently	x	
See evidence of adequate student feedback being provided to students?	x	
I saw samples of work from across all programme sites of delivery including overseas campuses and franchises where applicable	x	
<i>Please comment on:</i> <i>appropriateness of assessment for measuring achievement of standards</i> <i>The appropriateness and rigour of the course assessment strategy and methods of assessment;</i> <i>standards of marking and moderation (please comment on all overseas campuses and sites)</i> <i>procedures for assessment and examination.</i> <i>effectiveness and quality of feedback to students</i> <i>Are the processes for assessment, examination sound and fairly conducted in line with the University's/ Collaborative partner's (where applicable) regulations?</i>		
I would particularly like to commend the time and effort invested in moderation processes – this is done at the assignment level but also through checking the spread of grades being awarded by individual markers, which is a great to see. The spread of grades is explored thoroughly with an eye to key delegate characteristics, and again this is very reassuring. As I have noted in previous years, the grading matrixes are extremely detailed and targeted, enabling delegates to further develop in future assignments. Feedback is constructive and positive, with the experience and expertise of the professional delegates being valued and recognised.		
Programme Assessment Boards	Yes	No
Did you attend the Programme Assessment Board (this could include attendance via Microsoft Teams)?	x	

Did you receive relevant meeting, board, deadline dates and board paperwork in a timely manner?	x	
Please comment on: <i>The organisation and conduct of Programme Assessment Boards and, in the event of non-attendance, whether you were fully involved in the assessment process..</i>		
Excellent communication and organisation throughout		
School /Work Placement visits (if applicable) <i>If you attended any school/ work placement visits please provide comments below:</i> <i>Was the School/ work placement appropriate to support the students and delivery of the programme learning outcomes?</i> <i>Was there evidence of good collaboration between Middlesex University and the School / work placement?</i> <i>Was the assessment of trainees' attainment comparable with similar judgements across the sector?</i>		
N/A		
Apprenticeship programmes (if applicable) <i>Please consider and comment on:</i> <i>Do the programme and module learning outcomes mirror the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the apprenticeship standard and prepare apprentices for end-point assessment (EPA)?</i> <i>Is teaching and learning delivered in the context of on-the-job and off-the-job training?</i> <i>Are apprentices receiving a good level of support from the University?</i> <i>Does the partner work collaboratively with the apprentices' employers?</i> <i>Does the apprenticeship include an integrated or non-integrated degree?</i>		
N/A		
Collaborative Programmes <i>Please add any comments relating to the links between the University and the collaborative institution.</i>		
N/A		
Recommendations <i>Please use this section to provide the programme team with suggestions that you would like them to consider, arising from the comments within your report matters where, in your opinion, there is potential for enhancement.</i>		
In previous years I have raised the topic of Generative AI as something for the team to reflect on and consider, especially given the remote learning and assessment practices that dominate these courses. Over the last twelve months Gen AI has progressed hugely, and within NTU psychology we recognise that ensuring the continued integrity and authenticity of our assessment processes is even more vital than ever before. While reviewing some of the assessments ahead of the exam board, I felt that a response to the M03 Critical Analysis task for Autism Spectrum Disorders is something that could very easily be generated through AI, and this is just one specific example. I would encourage the team to continue to reflect on how they can design assessments that are less open to AI generation e.g. avoiding tasks that are mainly knowledge based. One possibility could be to add in periodic short		

vivas over Teams/Zoom to check in on understanding and applied knowledge, but I appreciate this has a significant workload impact and may not be at all practical. In terms of curriculum development, I would encourage the team to consider to what extent AI use is being built into their courses and curriculum, as this skillset is undoubtedly here to stay across all fields of work and practice. For 25/26 we are explicitly workloading staff to upskill in AI so that they have at least a minimum understanding of how AI use can integrate with their modules. Finally, it might also be worth considering being explicit about whether AI use is expected, accepted or not allowed in specific assessments – many institutions are adopting a ‘traffic light’ system to assist with this approach.

Actions

Please use this section if you require the programme team to take further action relating to issues which have a serious impact on academic standards or academic quality.

No actions required

Commendations / Good practice

Please comment here on any particular strengths, distinctive or innovative features of the programme(s)/ modules

As stated above: I would particularly like to commend the time and effort invested in moderation processes – this is done at the assignment level but also through checking the spread of grades being awarded by individual markers, which is a great to see. The spread of grades is explored thoroughly with an eye to key delegate characteristics, and again this is very reassuring.

Final Report – only applicable if you are completing your term as an External Examiner

Please consider and comment on:

- *Your overall experience of being an external examiner*
- *The overall development of the Programme/Modules during this time.*

Type your text here