

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2010– 2011

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION*Subject area and awards being examined:*

School of: Computing	Subject(s): Management Science/Computing for Business
Programme(s) / Module(s): UG & PG	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) BSc and MSc

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than 6 weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to:*

**Head of Academic Quality and Standards,
Academic Quality and Standards Team,
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building,
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT**

PART B: COMMENTS FOR THE INSTITUTION ON THE EXAMINATION PROCESS AND STANDARDS***Matters for Urgent Attention***

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box.

NONE

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

N/A

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School.

The programmes have developed well over the last four years. (a) There has appeared a wide range of optional modules, covering relevant topics, available to the students. This is particularly important in the fast evolving field of computer science. (b) As a consequence of the flexibility available in module choice, students also have the useful opportunity to modify their choice of degree programme during the programme so that they are able to take their studies in the most appropriate direction. (c) Facilities such as lab space have developed over the last few years. These facilities are well-equipped and prove useful to students when undertaking assignments or for project based work. (d) The introduction of a high weighting factor for the final year undergraduate project for many of the programmes has proved a good idea. Students are able to work closely with staff on a topic as close to the cutting edge of computer science as possible. (e) Good students continue to be attracted to the programmes and many show ability and achievement levels comparable with *Russell Group* universities.

Standards

- 1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award?**
 - The appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
 - The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

ILOs for both programmes and modules are completely appropriate and high standards are maintained in assessment and are therefore at appropriate levels.

- 2. Did the aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?**
 - The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Standards compare well with other *Russell Group* universities for which I have been External Examiner and aims and ILOs compare well with standard benchmarks for computer science.

- 3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs?**
 - The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
 - The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

There is a good mix of assessment methods – examinations, non-assessed (formative) coursework (many involving the use of new IT tools) and projects. Teaching is of excellent quality and academic staff are highly committed. Students with whom I talked were very positive about their learning experiences and are very proud of the School and institution. (It is helpful that each year external examiners are able to meet with a group of current students.)

- 4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and ILOs?**
 - The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

Students demonstrated their achievement of aims and ILOs in their assessed work. There were some strong student performances that compare well with the best I have seen in other good universities. Weaker students were only let down by their lack of effort and preparation on the taught material, and the lack of originality in their project work.

- 5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum**

N/A

- 6. The nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year**
It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

The spread of marks continues to be good, with examiners marking across the full range of available marks. On the programmes where the project has become a more heavily weighted element this continues to go well (see below). Meeting up with a group of current students is also a good idea.

- 7. The influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching**
This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

The move to more heavily weighted projects on certain programmes continues to be successful. Students are much influenced by research work being undertaken in the School in their choice of project topic. They also enjoy the benefit of 'guest lectures' from younger researchers active in fields related to potential projects. All this leads to dissertations being produced that are close to the cutting-edge of computer science activity, which is very encouraging.

The Examination Process

8. **The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?**

- *Whether external examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

YES

9. **Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks?**

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

YES

10. **Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

YES, I was able to see everything I wanted to see. It was apparent that marking was consistent within and across modules and was not unduly generous, but was also fair.

11. **Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners?**

YES, all conducted in a thorough manner. The Board was chaired very carefully.

12. **Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

YES, very carefully handled.

For Examiners involved in Mentoring Arrangements

If you have acted as a mentor to a new external examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements.

N/A

Other Comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form.

I was impressed by the strong commitment of the staff and the carefulness with which they treat the assessment and grading of students. In order to assist further their fair handling of mark levels across the different selections of modules that different students take, it might be useful to consider the introduction of some system for automatically identifying when marks on a particular module should be scaled in some way to make it more comparable with other modules. I would see this as a natural development of the care and attention already given.

School of Computing

University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

07 February 2012

Dear

Thank you for completing the external examiner reports for last session and the positive comments you have made on our programmes and procedures.

You raised a concern over the difficulty in assessing whether marks for an individual module are unduly high or low. The School's Taught Student Education have agreed that we should introduce a system to do this and discussed a number of possible options. We have now started to discuss this with other Schools in the Faculty of Engineering to find an appropriate solution that could be implemented for next session.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your input to our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes over your period as external examiner to the school.

Yours sincerely

Head of School