

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 Programme(s) / Module(s): Masters programmes	Subject(s): awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) MSc
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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?

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.

Although the numbers on the MSc programmes have remained fairly modest during the period of my appointment, the programmes demonstrate high qualities. Teaching is good, assessment procedures thorough and innovative, and there is strong staff commitment to the organisation of the projects. Each year a sizeable group of candidates on the programmes has been outstanding in ability, producing work of an extremely high standard. I have also been impressed by the standards of written work that have been required of students whose 1st language is not English. Staff have required submissions to be proof-read carefully and shown clearly what is required of students and how to get to the required level. This requirement has been more thoroughly handled than in other reputable institutions where I have been an examiner. This thoroughness has been a pleasing experience for me.

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.*

Both aspects are completely satisfactory.

- 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.*

Yes

- 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.*

Marking is thorough and assessment pitched at a high level. There is a good mix in assessment methods. Teaching is of a high standard and there is strong staff commitment to teaching the programmes and supervising projects.

- 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.*

The standard of the MSc programmes was as high as that at other similar institutions where I have been an examiner. In the cohort there was a good mix of student backgrounds and there was always a subgroup of outstanding students producing work at a level close to that expected of good research students.

- 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.

There have been no major changes since last time. The procedures for supervising projects and resolving conflicts in their marking are very good and worthy of wider dissemination.

- 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 project topics are strongly influenced by *hot topics* and areas of active research that are interests of the staff.

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 – all was clear.

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 had complete access to all I needed to see.

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

These aspects are very carefully handled.

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

Staff were very careful and considerate without compromising standards.

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.

Other Comments

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

My period as examiner has been made easy and enjoyable by the cooperation I have received from staff involved at all levels of the programmes.

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