

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Engineering/School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Subject(s):	Electrical Engineering
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Electrical Engineering and Renewable Energy Systems; Embedded Systems Engineering
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six 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?

Yes

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

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.*

The aims and learning outcomes of the programmes are at the level I would expect for a set of MSc courses targeted at an international cohort of students.

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.*

The aims and learning outcomes of the MSc programmes are in line with my experience of comparable programmes at other UK Universities.

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.*

The assessment methods used on this programme are appropriate. The students who I informally met before the examiners meeting had enjoyed the mixture of theoretical and practical work on their courses.

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.*

Yes, the students were all clearly given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding, application and knowledge.

A minor point regarding the examinations is that there is a choice of questions in most papers. In the longer term I wonder if moving to a format with more or all compulsory questions would make it easier to ensure that all ILOs are tested.

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. Please comment on 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.

I was very pleased to receive timely and appropriate feedback on my comments on the examination papers and marking schemes.

7. Please comment on 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.

There is strong evidence that the content of the programmes and the project opportunities enjoyed by the students are influenced by the current research interests of staff, as would be expected. This link is well exploited and the students I met had clearly been motivated to continue with higher level study and research careers.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

The support I received from my mentor was good, appropriate and very useful.

9. 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.*

The University's Handbook for External Examiners contained all the required information and procedures.

10. 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, marking criteria?

- *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 the required information was provided or was available on the web

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

I was provided with a full set of draft exam papers and solutions, the average quality of these documents was very good and the staff involved should be proud of their high level of professionalism in this regard. The examination questions were at an appropriate level and most of the examination papers were well written. A couple of the examination papers would have benefited from some form of proof reading. The marking schemes were generally excellent, but a couple needed more details in terms of mark allocation. This matter was mentioned at the Examination Board Meeting and I am happy that these minor issues will be dealt with going forward.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

I had access to all the examination scripts in the morning before the examiners meeting and the random selection I look at showed a good standard of marking to the prescribed marking guidelines.

I was given access to the VLE system before the meeting and was able to access the project reports and final marks for the project modules, this is a good resource. I would have liked to have been able to see the breakdown of the allocated marks for the final project module as the only mark available for this module on VLE was the final project mark.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

The range of projects reflects the research interests of the academic staff involved and seems very appropriate for the courses concerned.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

I attended the examiners meeting and all the arrangements were excellent, I was very satisfied with the recommendations of the Board and the way in which the meeting was efficiently and effectively run.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place for considering mitigating circumstances and generous allowance was made by the Examination Board when this seemed appropriate.

Other comments

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

On chatting informally to some of the students from the programmes I found that they had really enjoyed their courses and had come to the University due to personal recommendation from others who had already studied in Leeds. This level of recommendation shows an excellent level of satisfaction with the programmes offered and the staff involved in the delivery of these programmes should be congratulated on this excellent endorsement of their work.

I find the use of a 2.0 to 9.0 scale for the allocation of degree classifications very peculiar, unnecessary and potentially very confusing. I understand the mapping system used, but feel this mapping system and scale is out of line with current practice at other, comparable Universities known to me.

From:
Sent: 28 October 2013 13:06
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Subject: External Examiner Report

Dear

Many thanks for sending in your External Examiner's report, and for the supportive comments therein. Concerning your comment in box 4 about question choice, we have had a lot of discussion about this in the past, and decided upon a standard format of "answer 3 questions out of 4" for our exam papers. We did experiment with papers within which all questions were compulsory, but decided that this was too inflexible, and put too much pressure on students in what was already a high-pressure assessment situation. All our modules have other assessment exercises in addition to (or instead of) a final exam, so we are able to assess learning outcomes in different ways and to ensure that all key learning outcomes are assessed. Concerning your comments in box 11, all our exam papers and marking schemes are proof-read: they are reviewed by the (internal) moderator for each particular module, who provides written recommendations to the examiner. The papers and solutions are also checked for correct formatting by the Student Support Office and the Examinations Officer. This process ought to be "watertight", so we will try & ensure that it is, next year. Regarding box 12, we can certainly send you the full set of component marks for the MSc projects next year.

I'll invite the University's QA office to reply to you directly concerning the 2.0-9.0 mapping for classification purposes.

Best wishes,

Director of Student Education,
School of Electronic & Electrical Engineering, The University of Leeds, Leeds,
LS2 9JT, UK

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e-mail:

Tel. ,
Fax.
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