

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:	School of Process, Environmental and Materials Engineering
Subject(s):	<i>Fire and Explosion Engineering</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Fire and Explosion Engineering
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PGCert/MSc Fire and Explosion Engineering

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**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

. No areas requiring urgent attention

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?

NA

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

NA

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.*

From examination of the structure and content of the programmes I am content that the mix of course topics and Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate for the subject area. I am also satisfied that the content provides students with the correct set of knowledge areas and skills to an appropriate standard required for professional application in Fire and Explosion Engineering.

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.*

From my experience of teaching and examining similar courses at different universities in the UK, US, Sweden and New Zealand I feel that the Leeds course is comparable with other courses in terms of course content and standards. There are some differences in emphasis in the Leeds course (as there are in others). While the Leeds course provides comprehensive cover of all the necessary and relevant subject areas for fire engineering, Leeds has particular strengths in relation to physical and chemical aspects of fires and explosions. It is especially appropriate for engineers intending to work in industrial applications, as well appropriate for those intending to work in building design applications.

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 were clearly structured and applied, with appropriate marking for the modules for which I viewed course work, and classification of awards. Prior to the examiners meeting I was provided with information on marking schemes and these were explained and discussed during the meeting.

From the course work I viewed and the grading discussions, I am content that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is high.

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 academic standards achieved varied to the extent expected on this course. The quality of work was comparable with that from the previous year on the Leeds course and comparable courses at other universities I have been associated with

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

NA

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.

Standards have been maintained since last year. The opportunity arranged to meet some of the students, and to be invited to hear their research project presentations was useful.

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.

It is clear that the curriculum is heavily influenced by the Leeds fire and explosion research strengths. This shows not just in the course work but also in the design and research project topics chosen by the students and the way they were implemented. There were some excellent research projects this year.

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

NA

The Examination/Assessment Process

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.*

I have been well prepared and guided with respect to the courses and course material by the administrative staff and given all the access to course material, exam papers and course work that I have found necessary.

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.*

Appropriate documentation has been provided

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 and reviewed all draft examination papers/assessment projects. I am content that the nature and level of the questions and assignments were appropriate. Provision was made for me to provide comments on draft papers. These were available for consideration prior to finalizing the papers.

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?

All appropriate assessed and examination work has been made available both by access to the VLE system and by making hard copies available for inspection in the department, in advance of the Examiners meeting. Scripts were clearly marked and annotated with appropriate comments.

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

I was impressed by the choice of dissertation topics made available for students and the facilities provided for them to be carried out. The choice of subjects and methods and standard of assessment were appropriate.

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?

The administrative arrangements were satisfactory and staff very helpful. I was able to attend the Examiners meeting and the relevant aspects, and any issues relating to the meeting, were made clear to me. I reviewed the grading for the students and in particular for any students borderline for particular awards. I was satisfied with the recommendations of the Board. I was invited to hear the student presentations on their research projects, but was unable to attend on the day. However I did subsequently meet several of the students and had an opportunity to discuss their research projects and their general impressions of the course, which were very positive.

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

It was evident that staff went to considerable lengths to ensure that all students were treated fairly, and that due and careful consideration was given to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence.

Other comments

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

My feeling is that the main future professional career paths for graduates of this course are either in the area of building design or in relation to fire and explosion design and safety of industrial plant and processes. Although the fundamental skill sets required for these two paths are similar, and provided by the Leeds course, some aspects are more important for one path than the other. Where students have a clear idea of which path they intend to follow, it might be appropriate to enable them to put more weight in the course to the relevant aspects, perhaps through their design and research projects. I feel this already happens to some extent, but might be given further consideration.

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CP/AJB/fe
5 December 2013

Dear]

External Examiner's Report 2012/13 – MSc Fire and Explosion Engineering

Thank you for your completed External Examiner's Report for our MEng/BEng degree programme in Fire and Explosion Engineering. I have copied this to the School's Director of Student Education (Professor Fairweather) and Head of Process Engineering (Dr Poole) and their comments are incorporated with mine below.

Firstly, many thanks for the complimentary remarks about the quality and standards of the programme, as well as those about the research projects. I am also pleased to note that you were again happy with the administrative arrangements.

Your final comments about tailoring individual student design and research projects towards aspects relevant to their future careers are also noted and we will look at this for future cohorts.

This marks the end of your duties as External Examiner for 2012/13. Once again, many thanks for your efforts and we look forward to seeing you again next October for the 2013/14 Taught Postgraduate Examinations Board meeting.

Yours sincerely

Head of School.

Cc. AQST