

The University of Leeds**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

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

School of Process, Environmental Materials Eng	Subject(s): Quarry Management and Operations
Programme(s) / Module(s):	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.)
Quarry Management and Operations	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.

This was the final cohort of students for this programme at Leeds

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.

I have been External Examiner for the final two years of this programme at Leeds. Last year's cohort was at PG Certificate level. This year the cohort was at MSc level. This change was clear in the level of assessment, based as it was on high quality project work only this year. The course has been a successful collaboration between a major company and the University with both partners playing a full part in it's success.

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 structure and content of the programme, and its aims and intended learning outcomes are appropriate for this level of award

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 programme has been at an appropriate level when compared with other programmes in this study area that I have seen.

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 range of student performance as indicated by the marks presented at the Examination Board, suggest a satisfactory teaching and learning environment. There has been a good mix of assessment between assignments, on-line discussion groups, and tests, but during this year the work has focussed on a 60 credit major project. I was particularly impressed with the case histories that formed the basis of these 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 academic standards apparent from a review of the course material suggest that this cohort of students demonstrate a very similar pattern of performance to those that are in my experience of comparable courses. I was particularly please to see mature students, often without conventional academic backgrounds but with considerable industry experience, performing well on this course.

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.

This is the final cohort of students on this course. I am a first year examiner of this course at this level, although I have seen work at PG Certificate level previously at Leeds. I believe that the project work seen demonstrates an appropriate level of 'difficulty' for students working at this level.

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 research influence was evident in the assignments – particularly the work on rock blasting. As I commented in my report on the PG Certificate last year, the high quality and interest level of the project subjects appeared both to rely on the close collaboration with the sponsoring aggregate company, but also the inputs of staff from their own research activity.

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.*

I confirm that the material I received was sufficient.

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?**

I was given access to all assessed work together with staff feedback to students.

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

Very good

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

I understand from staff and comments noted at the Examination Board that such procedures are in place.

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.

One of my objectives this year was to satisfy myself that the run-down of this course was being conducted in an orderly manner and that students were not disadvantaged by the situation in which they found themselves. I was able to speak with two students from this cohort who had given up their time to come back to Leeds to discuss their experience on the PG Certificate and MSc. These students were mature students from the 'Distinction' band of the spread of results from this cohort. The pleasure both these students had from identifying themselves as "Leeds students" was evident. They were enthusiastic about their programme of study and appreciative of the accessibility of staff, and the level of feedback received. I am satisfied that they were high quality students. From these discussions it seemed clear to me that high standards have been maintained right through to the end of the programme and that no students were being disadvantaged by the run-down of the course. It also seemed to me that the contribution of the company supplying students for this course was an important factor in this controlled closure, but that University staff played their full part in the student experience.

Faculty of Engineering

School of Process, Environmental and Materials Engineering
University of Leeds
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6 July 2012

Dear [redacted]

**External Examiner's Report 2011/12 -
MSc Quarry Management and Operations**

Thank you for your External Examiner's Report for our MSc in Quarry Management and Operations. I have copied this to our Director of Student Education ([redacted]), the Head of Process Engineering ([redacted]) and the relevant teaching team, and their comments are incorporated with mine below.

I would like to thank you for the complimentary remarks about the programme content and standards. Although this is the first, and last, cohort on this programme, we have endeavoured to ensure that they have had an excellent student experience, and your discussions with the two students would seem to suggest this. Your comments about the high quality of the projects and individual assignments are also much appreciated, as are the remarks about our Examination Board procedures.

Once again, thank you for your efforts this year. Although this marks the end of your duties for the MSc programme, we look forward to seeing you again at the June 2013 Board for the final cohort of MEng students.

Yours sincerely

Head of School.