

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Environment / School of Earth & Environment
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MRes Climate & Atmospheric Science
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MRes

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:

Institution:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

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 Quality Assurance**
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

n/a

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

n/a

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 MRes Climate & Atmospheric Science programme provides research training and subject specific skills & knowledge for physical science and mathematics graduates in preparation for PhD study in Atmospheric Sciences, broadly interpreted. The programme structure incorporates taught components, fieldwork, research skills and a 90 credit research project (dissertation) component, with considerable flexibility over module choice to fit the interests and backgrounds of specific students.

The programme structure and content is essentially unchanged from the 2012-13 session, and remains appropriate for these aims. The standards set easily meet MRes level.

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.*

No national benchmark exists, but the programme is of an equivalent standard to related MSc programmes at other UK (Russell Gp) HEIs.

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.*

A range of assessment methods are used, from traditional examinations, coursework, seminar reports, fieldwork and a written dissertation. For the major project, the initial proposal, literature review, written dissertation, oral and poster presentations are assessed. I attended the final project presentation / poster session, and found the achievements of the (single) 2013/14 student to be at a good level, commensurate with appropriate quality of instruction.

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 broad range of assessment methods give ample opportunity to demonstrate achievement against the course aims. The single student taking the course this year demonstrated a good level of achievement.

The School may wish to consider clarifying the extent to which students are given explicit guidance as to how to best take advantage of the training opportunities on offer – a balance between encouraging independence and what might be expected within taught provision.

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 not made aware of substantial enhancements since the previous year.

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.

The programme is very heavily influenced by current research, with the MRes student research project forming an original piece of research, taking place within the context of the research activities of the individual supervisor.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

n/a

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

9. 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

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. 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.

Copies of coursework relating to the research components of the course, and seminar skills, were provided to me electronically ahead of the examination board.

11. 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.

Provision of updated course brochure etc would have been useful

12. 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?

Draft examination papers were, I understand, reviewed within the EE arrangements for their parent programmes – no other bespoke assessments are specific to this programme alone.

13. 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?

The coursework I reviewed, which related to the dissertation and seminar skills modules, was appropriately assessed and appropriate feedback provided.

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

Yes. The single student was not disadvantaged in assessment by cohort size, as the dissertation, presentation and poster were all assessed by experienced staff with a good understanding of appropriate standards.

15. 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?

Yes - I attended the final presentation session, met with the student and attended the final board of examiners.

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

Not required for this cohort

Other comments

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

n/a



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Re: Response to External Examiner's Report (MRes Climate and Atmospheric Science), 2013/14

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