

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

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

Faculty / School of:	Mathematics
Subject(s):	<i>Applied Mathematics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Mathematical Sciences
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

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.*

Highly appropriate intended learning outcomes and standards across the board.

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.*

A good range of assessment methods and plenty of evidence of high quality teaching, learning and assessment.

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.

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.

No issues last 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.

This is strongly informed by academic staff research interests, as expected in a Masters programme.

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

I was available for new externals as a Mentor but in the event I think they were as well-versed as I was.

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.*

Yes, certainly. The school is acting very helpfully and openly, and has quickly and efficiently provided all necessary detail in terms of the documentation.

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

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 saw and had time to comment on all exam papers for Applied Mathematics. The nature and level of the questions was very good. I am happy to see that previous variations to the exam rubric have been reduced considerably.

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?

Yes on all counts.

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

A wide range of interesting projects seem to be available at Masters level and I was able to study these and the reports in detail. The method and standard of assessment was very good, though I have made some specific recommendations that the "paper trail" for assessment of MSc dissertations can be improved. In particular I think there should be some opportunity to record formal input to the assessment process from the project supervisor.

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?

Yes

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

Yes

Other comments

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

**Response to the External Examiner's Report
on the MSc Mathematics, MSc Atmosphere-Ocean Dynamics and MSc Mathematics and
Computer Science programmes 2011/12**

Dear <>

We would like to thank you for your thorough work in examining our MSc programmes. We are pleased by your comments on the high quality of the programmes, teaching and assessment. Your suggestions on improving forms and paperwork related to the assessment of MSc dissertations have been passed on to the Programme Coordinators. They noted that the input from the supervisors is already used for assessing independence and initiative. The Programme Coordinators will look into ways to make supervisors' input more structured and explicit.

Best wishes,

<>

Head of School of Mathematics

5th March 2013