

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:	Food Science and Nutrition
Subject(s):	Food Science
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Food Science, Food Science (Food Biotechnology) MSc Quality & Innovation FOOD5016M - Physical aspects of Food FOOD5045M - Microbiological and Chemical Food Safety FOOD5055M - Food Processing FOOD5071M - Research Project FOOD5115M - Colloid and Dairy Science FOOD5270 - Food Analysis FOOD5405M - Professional Development for Employment and Research FOOD5470M - Sensory properties, Food Texture and Structure FOOD5241M - Food structure and function FOOD5196M - Impacts of food processing on nutritional quality FOOD5280M - Functional food FOOD5460M - Food product & development FOOD5480 - Food safety and quality
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

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

None in particular. The only relevant subjects upraised by some of the students is related to a certain difficulty they have encountered due to the gap between their prior learning experience to approach food processing and food sensory teaching. Furthermore, students asked to have a better professional development (5405) activity in order to be better prepared for the job in the industrial framework.

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?

I was always engaged in the 2010-201, 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years

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

First of all I wish to say that the experience I made as External examiner was really exciting and very useful to me. I was engage on an assessment system - the UK one - that is not common in the Italian Academia. I've been also positively impressed since I recognized that my suggestions and comments have been considered and along the four years some criticalities were faced and the relationship between students and teaching staff has been improved. Also the quality of the student's final report improved progressively in both the typologies as new food product (MSc Quality and Innovation) and individual manuscript in form of publishing paper (MSc in Food Science & Food Biotechnology).

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.*

MSc Food Science is generally appropriate to the MSc level. In respect to the ILOs most of the disciplines (modules) are appropriate even in a few cases in which the exams are referred mainly to basic scientific knowledge and they should be known mainly from bachelor level. (e.g. FOOD5016 Physical Aspects Of Food Chemistry)

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.*

MSc at Leeds University are recognized as one of the best in student's satisfaction and reputation so I believe that the national subject benchmark are joined. It remains to be better understood if the Master programme offered by the School are partially superimposed to the bachelor programme from the same school and thus in some cases (mainly the most general in Food Science) even the ILOs and Aim are similar between BSc and MSc. It is not the case of Quality and Innovation and Food Biotechnology

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.*

Generally speaking the assessment is appropriate to the teaching topic and the activities carried out by the class. The methods to assess seem to be good. Sometimes in the exam papers there are some discrepancies in the same module framework: some questions and part of the exam, on specific topics where there is a strong research experience, are very tough, whilst other questions are quite basic and easy. On the other hand, in the easier topics of the exam (e.g. FOOD5115 Colloid And Dairy Science (Food Science) the students are often wrong on simple questions. In my opinion this is due to the different background of the incoming students and because in the few teaching hours for each module, often it is clear that the students having not a FST background strong enough fail even simple questions.

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 students have adequate opportunity to demonstrate what they achieved in terms of Aims and ILOs. I'm confident that in comparison with other similar courses both in UK and the rest of EU, the students in MSc in Food Science, Food Biotechnology and Quality & innovation of Leeds University are surely very well motivated and probably have a higher awareness of their objectives and tools.

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

Not applicable

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.

MSc Quality and Innovation is for sure the most attractive programme among the offered MSc. The high level of the NPd activities, the team work, the creative and technically well done development of the new products are surely a unique attraction in the FST teaching panorama in EU. Students are pushed to be independent and to search by themselves the best solutions for ingredients, packaging, labeling and marketing even there is not a specific module with a competent teacher on each of those aspects. Nevertheless some aspects could be still improved: some parts of the module topics could be better explained (too little teaching room in the module programme). MSc in Food Science are more conventional even the aspects related to the strong and specific research activities are peculiar and well studied in depth. On the other hand this brings to a slight unbalance between those topics (colloidal science, Processing, biotechnology, physical-chemistry) and others in the module programmes. MSc in Food Biotechnology is different from Food Science because the main hub is on biotechnology but even if there are three options of supervisors for the final project / dissertation, students said that it is difficult to get a biotech topic. No enough topics on biotech are available for the final project.

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 influence of the research in the teaching activity is well exploited, since the researchers are members of the Board and a great part of the laboratory exercises are on topics where the staff has a great experience. Nevertheless, this could be a limit in deepening other aspects, also important to know for a concrete and complete knowledge in food science and

technology. The Staff is aware of this fact and the insertion of different teachers even as seminars, is improving and it is to be encouraged even with specific funds.

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've only spoken a little about external examiner procedure, scope and behaviour with a young colleague that perhaps would be named as external examiner replacing me, but I am not aware on the nomination.

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, as well as the last Academic Years, I had possibility to access to all the documents I needed and a copy of the well detailed student's Handbook. During the year the materials to be examined (e.g. proposed exam papers and resit marks) were sent in due time. I had the possibility to examine all the final projects and papers and all the material to evaluate the groups working in product development teamwork. Also this year the results of the NPD teams were very well prepared.

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, I received a copy of the well detailed student's Handbook, appropriate documentation about the programmes specification and it was complete and coherent. I had the assessment details and it would be good to have access to the assessment criteria at the time of the papers examination. In few cases in the exam paper summary there is not the list of all the appropriate questions. Guide To The Answers For The External in few cases was missed.

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?

Yes, also this year all the examination procedures were sent in advance to collect comment and reviews. Generally speaking the questions were adequate to the teaching activity. Sometimes there is a difference of level among the questions in the same exam paper, but it is related to the different teaching activities carried out during the lessons..

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, I had the chance to check all the assessed exam papers. The marking system is easily understandable and the guide for marking scheme is almost always available. In few cases some papers on marking scheme, question explanation for external examiner, explanation of assessment rules were missed

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

*For MSc in Food Science and Food Biotechnology the individual work was referred to a work written as a paper published on a scientific journal specific and topic probably part of the module programme. The subjects were correctly referred to the MSc programme. The method of assessment is appropriate.
In MSc Quality and Innovation the main output is the new developed product, where students are independent in all the aspect of NPD*

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, I attended to the two meetings planned the first in July, with the students to collect their comments, criticisms and proposals and to participate to the Board meeting, the MSc examiners meeting to consider exam performance, where a good discussion on marks to pass or fails with open contribution from the teaching staff on each vote moderation of non compulsory Exams. The Board invited the external examiners to explain their proposals to improve the assessment procedure also form the student meeting. Before this meeting, it was organized to have Examination of scripts/ coursework The second trip to Leeds was in September where I participated to the MSc Examiner Board.

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

Yes, this year during the Board of Examiner's meeting in few circumstances has been decided in order to mitigate critical situations and go towards student's needs. During the Board meeting in September, there was the examination of few position (1 in particular in the MSc in Nutrition) where marks could be rose to reach the upper qualification level. Many students did exam resit, to reach the graduation

Other comments

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

Students reported that the laboratory organisation should be improved, with technicians or more personnel able to facilitate the student's laboratory experiments



17/12/2014

Programmes: MSc Food Science
MSc Food Science (Biotechnology)
MSc Food Innovation and Quality

Dear

Thank you for your final External Examiner's report. As usual we thank you for your input throughout the examination process and the valuable observations that you have made on the programmes over the past four years. The report has now been presented to and discussed by the School Taught Student Education Committee.

Thank you for the many positive comments that you have made about the teaching, examinations, curriculum and organisation of examination procedures. There are a number of observations that you have made in the report, and responses to your observations are made in the following paragraphs.

As you have noted, the MSc Food Science does have some modules that are co-taught with UG modules, and so there are some ILOs that are similar – however, the MSc Food Science does have ILOs that are different to those of the UG programme. In fact the MSc Quality and Innovation and MSc Food Biotechnology both have some co-taught modules too, but again each has different assessment and different programme ILOs.

Although on a particular examination paper some questions based on an individual's research area may appear much tougher than other questions, due to the way the teaching is carried out, the students do not perceive a difference in difficulty.

It has been noticeable that the background of some students is less strong, but the School does take great care in identifying the profiles of degree programmes from different institutions to enable better selection of candidates.

We are pleased with your support for the MSc Food Quality and Innovation programme and the way in which we deliver it. However, as you have pointed out, there is sometimes confusion amongst the students about certain aspects of the course. A number of changes have been made to improve communication between staff and students and to make clearer the expectations of set work.

You noted that there might be a slight imbalance between topics making up the MSc programme. The module balance is similar in the MSc Food Science, Food Biotechnology and Food Science and Nutrition programmes. The MSc Food Science has a 30 credit specialisation in food colloids and the

related physical chemistry of foods, and so shows the same specialisation as the MSc Food Science (Food Biotechnology) which has 30 credits specialisation in biotechnology and the MSc Food Science and Nutrition which has 30 credits specialisation in nutrition.

We have discussed the problem that the Food Biotechnology students think that they have not been assigned a biotechnology topic for their project. We believe that this has been due to their perception of what constitutes a biotechnology project as most of the projects assigned to Food Biotechnology students were in fact biochemistry/biotechnology projects. The School will ensure that the bases of the topics are better communicated to the students.

Your final point was a report from students about laboratory organisation needing improvement. This has been discussed with laboratory staff who will work towards better organisation of laboratory sessions and training of demonstrators.

May I take this opportunity to thank you once more for your commitment and input to all of our assessment practices, as you know we have been able to implement many of your suggestions over the last four years,