

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:	Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Subject(s):	Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Programme(s) / Module(s):	All
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BEng/MEng

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 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

. None.

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 learning outcomes, structure and content of programmes and the academic standards are entirely appropriate to the awards given.

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. The programmes are comparable with those at other similar UK institutions and are consistent with the national benchmarks (e.g. UK Spec) and the Framework for HE Qualifications.

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 are mostly traditional. They are robust and entirely appropriate. Student performance suggests that teaching and learning quality are good.

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.*

Students are given ample opportunity to demonstrate their achievement. Academic standards are good. The students' performance is similar to that of students on comparable courses. There is a spectrum of strengths and weakness when considering the individuals in the student cohort. There is some suggestion in the distribution of Year 1 marks that the BTEC students struggling to achieve to the same extent as A-level students. The Department feels this is principally due to their less thorough preparation mathematical skills and has a strategy involving extra maths classes planned to address this next year.

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 commented last year on the continuing strength in microwave engineering which is becoming increasingly rare in University engineering Departments. This persists which is good to see.

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 research tradition of the School is very strong and clearly informs the teaching in many ways and at a range of levels.

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

A new external examiner was appointed this year. <> is extremely experienced, however, and mentoring is neither required nor appropriate.

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.

The guidance provided is useful and sufficient. I have had access to a wide range of material and have been encouraged to ask for any further material or information that might I might want to see which as not initially made available.

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.

I have seen all the appropriate documentation relating to programme and module specifications etc.

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?

The external examiners were provided with all draft exam papers. The academic levels were entirely appropriate to the stage of the programmes being examined. I was given the opportunity to make comments on these papers and these were considered by the internal examiners.

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?

I was given access to sufficient assessed work to have good confidence in my evaluation of the standard of student work. The sample of scripts I saw raised no concerns about quality assurance with respect to the assessment processes.

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

The range of project topics is good. The challenge presented by the projects is appropriate and the standard of assessment is consistent with that in other UK universities.

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?

The administrative arrangements were entirely satisfactory. The Board of Examiners was conducted professionally and objectively. The decision processes are tightly determined by the University's regulations and the Board followed these regulations scrupulously. Where discretion was allowed the Board debated the individuals at length and came to decisions that I felt were entirely justified.

16. 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

I thank the Head of Department and his staff for their hospitality and professionalism.

From:
Sent: 30 June 2014 17:28
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: External Examiner Report - BEng/MEng Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Attachments: exex report 1314.docx

Dear

Many thanks for your support for the School in your role as External Examiner this year, and for the very prompt return of your Examiner's report.
I don't think there's anything in this year's report that requires a response or any clarification from me – so we must be doing something right!

Look forward to doing business with you again next year.

Best wishes

Director of Student Education,
School of Electronic & Electrical Engineering,
The University of Leeds,
Leeds,
LS2 9JT, UK

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e-mail:

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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:	Engineering, School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Subject(s):	Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BEng and MEng

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**Completed report**

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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

The average mark of one first year subject was extremely low (below 30%). This needs to be addressed urgently. This low average mark indicates that the class did not grasp what was being taught or the examination paper was not appropriate for the material taught.

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?

Yes, all information was provided in a timely fashion.

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.*

Programmes' aims and learning outcomes were compatible with the award for BEng and MEng degrees. The standards of the assessment are good.

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, the programmes' aims and objects meet the expectation of the national subject benchmark. In particular, the programmes offered are all accredited by national accreditation body (i.e. IET).

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 in general is appropriate for the modules I was responsible for. However, there was one module, 1st year analogue circuits, where I thought the questions may be a bit too difficult for the students taking this module. The average marks was very low (in the 20's) and a detail study of the examination paper revealed that at least some questions could be unintentionally inviting students to provide the WRONG answers (almost like a trap). I have already raised this with the department verbally and they promised to look into this.

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.*

Generally, yes, with the exception of that one module I mentioned in 3) above.

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.

Not applicable – this is my first 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 department is very research active and achieved high RAE rating in 2008 (top of the UoA). Therefore it is only natural that their research filtered into the UG programmes.

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

No.

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

Not applicable.

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.

The materials provided to me were both appropriate and sufficient.

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.

Yes, everything were provided in a timely fashion.

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?

Yes, draft examination papers were provided well in advance.

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?

All examination papers and answers were made available. I would welcome strong steer from the department so that I would know how to use the limited time I have during the Examiner's meeting visiting to examine the vast amount of materials presented. In that way, I think I may be able to have a better overview of the programme's strength and weaknesses.

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

Yes, the choice and assessment were appropriate.

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?

The conduct of the Board meeting was done well. Not every academic staff were present, which is a bit disappointing. There may be a case to insist that ALL staff must attend Board of Examiners meeting as in some top institutions. Surely we owe this to students who spent three or four years with the department!

16. 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

Overall, the department offers a very good UG degree programme that is appropriate for the students attending the course at Leeds. The standard is good and the processes of assessment appeared to be well oiled.

From:
Sent: 01 April 2015 13:17
To:
Cc:
Subject: FW: External Examiner Report - BEng/MEng Electronic Engineering
Attachments: exex report 1314.docx

Dear

Many thanks for sending your examiner's report on our BEng/MEng programmes.

We are required to make a written response to your report, so I will do so below.

The main specific issue was the low mark in the 1st year Circuit Analysis and Design module (ELEC1130). To clarify, the average mark for the module was 45%, whilst the average mark for the exam paper was 32%. The marks in the 20s were exam marks out of 60. It was clearly a disappointing set of results – our target band for the average module mark is between 55 and 65%, and this was not achieved in ELEC1130 nor in ELEC1510 (Fundamentals of Electrical Engineering). We discussed at the time the question on the ELEC1130 paper which may have been a pitfall for students: the question showed a circuit diagram in which there was a wiring error (deliberately drawn by the examiner). Some students may not have looked at the diagram carefully, and simply assumed that it was wired as normal. However, students had been presented with similar examples in the module, so they had certainly been introduced to the idea that a circuit diagram could be wrongly wired and therefore not work as intended. I have discussed this with the module leader, who acknowledges that it may have been a bit of an “own goal” in terms of exam marks, so he is not intending to repeat this, this year.

You asked for a “strong steer” on best use of time during the visit. I’m certainly happy to provide that, and will discuss with both _____ and yourself in good time for your June visit.

You suggested that there may be a case to insist that all staff attend the Board of Examiners meeting. I don't think that is necessary, because no academic judgements are made in the meeting. Progression and classification outcomes are determined on a purely numerical basis. Even the “academic discretion” which is exercised for candidates on a classification borderline is required to be a solely deterministic process. I do make a point of speaking to project supervisors of borderline candidates before the meeting, but the purpose of this is only to confirm that the Board may have confidence that the final project mark is accurate: the “academic discretion” then involves mechanically comparing the student's marks purely objectively against the discretionary criteria. So there is no requirement for any specific member of staff to be present, and not even any requirement for a quorum. That said, Progression and Awards Board meeting is attended by the great majority of our teaching staff.

Best wishes