

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:	Mathematics
Subject(s):	<i>Applied Mathematics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Mathematics MSc Atmosphere-Ocean Dynamics MSc Mathematics and Computer Science
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 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

The programmes offer a good range of interesting options at an appropriate level. The teaching, assessment and marking procedures are well-justified in addition to being well overseen and applied. There are only small numbers on the MSc programmes but I believe they do not suffer because of this – much of the teaching can be very usefully shared with 4th year of the undergraduate masters programmes in Mathematics.

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 aims and ILOs are commensurate to the level of award. The standards are appropriate to the awards under consideration.

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.*

The assessment methods are a justifiable mix of examination, project work and other assessment methods. They give me the confidence that the assessment outcomes do reflect the achievement of the students. In particular the MSc includes a significant dissertation. From what I have seen the projects have been well chosen, supervised and marked.

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, there are ample opportunities to do this and the assessment are I think comparable to similar programmes in the UK.

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 believe the documentation associated with the marking of the dissertations has improved year-on-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.*

Research is clearly influencing the range of modules and their content, both in terms of the courses offered and the dissertations supervised.

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.

This was fine.

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, to an appropriate level.

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, and yes.

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?

Yes.

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

Yes – I saw a number of dissertations corresponding to students who had taken “applied mathematics” projects as part of their MSc. These were of a good standard and the marking was well justified and documented.

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.

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

N/A

Response to the External Examiner's Report
on the MSc Mathematics, MSc Atmosphere-Ocean Dynamics and
MSc Mathematics and Computer Science programmes 2013/14

We thank _____ for _____ thorough work in examining our programmes. We are pleased by _____ positive comments on the overall standards of our teaching and assessment and on the high quality of the dissertations. We would like to use this opportunity to thank _____ for _____ dedicated work and excellent service as an External Examiner for the past four years.

Head of School of Mathematics
February 2015