

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:	School of Earth & Environment
Subject(s):	<i>Structural Geology with Geophysics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc
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

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?

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

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as external examiner of this course. Over the years I have seen it progressively improve from a very high standard to one which satisfies all the requirements for a leading taught post-graduate degree of international standing. The staff are to be congratulated for providing a vocational training which manages to equip students for a job in both industry and academia, with training in a broad range of structural geological theory, methods and practise. The fact that the course material provides for the training of students for jobs within a broad range of application areas, ranging from minerals, to coal and hydrocarbon, speaks volumes of those designing and presenting the course. This course is unique and all concerned should be congratulated and encouraged to maintain their very high standards – these are credit to the School and the university.

Standards

- 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.*

Learning outcomes are appropriate, as are the standards required.

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.*

I have no experience of associated British benchmarks, but from what I know of similar programmes (MSc in a variety of geosciences-related topics, one of which I contribute to at University <>), this course certainly matches their required standards.

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 broad range of assessment methods are used, ranging from practical work, to assignments linked to fieldwork (poster presentations), project presentations and project work. The allocation of marks are appropriate and I can see no issues with the quality of teaching and associated learning.

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 course shows a broad range of marks reflecting the abilities of the student group, which are nevertheless generally good quality students.

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

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.

All of the suggested changes from previous years were implemented, such that this year's suggestions are of relatively minor concern. The feedback process of external examiners having a discussion session with students, works very well and the course has evolved into an excellent programme.

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.

From a structural geological perspective associated lecturing staff are very familiar with the most recent developments in their field and this expertise feeds into coursework. For example, the projects are sometimes of very high quality, with a occasional projects providing quality work which is at or very close to publication level.

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

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

The overlap between changing external examiners is very useful, as is the combination of academic and industry examiners – I think the system works well.

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.

Yes

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

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 – the nature and level of questions was appropriate.

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 – on all counts.

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

Yes – most of the projects were very good indeed. Some may seem somewhat more difficult than others, but this is fine and inevitable, and allowances can be made for the different challenges of different projects. Staff know that engaging companies must be briefed on the general requirements for associated projects and that the structural geological content of such projects should be as high as possible.

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

School of Earth and Environment
University of Leeds



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

4th June 2015

Dear

RE: Response to External Examiner's Report - MSc Structural Geology with Geophysics; 2013-14

Firstly, I wish to thank you sincerely for your extremely helpful comments and feedback as well as your visit to Leeds during the presentations week, they are greatly appreciated. As you are finishing your appointment as the external examiner on the course, I would also like to express my appreciation for taking up this task and for all the work you have done to improve the programme in the course of your appointment.

I was happy to read from your report that you have found very little in the programme to improve on in its current form. We are of course aware that the demands of both vocational employment and academic research are not static and will keep changing in the coming years. We are committed to following these developments closely in order to adapt accordingly by making necessary changes in the programme, as we have done with your help over the last few years. We also aim at maintaining and even improving the high standards of the final projects and, as you note, having good communications with industry partners is key to achieving this.

Yours sincerely,

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