

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Faculty / School of: | Chemical and Process Engineering |
| Subject(s): | |
| Programme(s) / Module(s): | Energy and Environment, Sustainable Energy Systems, Bioenergy, Low Carbon Technologies |
| 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

These were highlighted at the appropriate time

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 experience received has been a positive one. The development and enhancement has been one of consistency from year to year. The standards achieved are consistent with the quality of the degree offered and great efforts have been made to improve exam script management.

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 taught programme provides students with the appropriate level of ILOs within the Energy and Environment engineering fields. The structure and content of the course allows students to develop their problem solving ability and a greater understanding of the knowledge, theory and issues within this very important field. This basic knowledge was then used to support a research project.

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.*

the aims and ILOs are appropriate and are similar to MSc degrees offered at other universities

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 for the taught element of the programme are varied and suitable for the type of degree offered. These range design and research project work through to examinations and associated coursework. The assessment is well placed throughout the programme and the student progression criteria is clearly understood by the students

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 examination scripts, coursework and research project were assessed. The examination papers were at a level where students of differing abilities could attempt the questions and their ability would be reflected in the overall assessment mark. The individual projects examined were also at an appropriate level and of a very good quality for this type of degree.

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.

The school has again put in place additional steps to ensure better examination script management and verification procedures

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 on teaching and learning is clearly evident in the course where the individual project is usually attached to a research group and the modules offered are associated with individual lecturer research areas. Again this is traditional for the type of course offered and is in line with other degree schemes offered within the University sector.

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

The programme offered provides integrated PhD students with the necessary skills to undertake their research programme. The Transferable Skills module is worthy of particular note. It allows students to strengthen particular skills and allows to use external placements to strengthen particular facets of the potential PhD programme

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.

All the necessary guidelines and all other relevant information for my role as the external examiner was received in good time.

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.

Received all relevant documentation

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?

All draft examination papers and model solutions were received for comment and review. The nature and level of the questions were appropriate for the course. Unable to comment of suitability of the arrangements for consideration of my comments since there was no feedback given.

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 assessed and examination scripts were made available which allowed evaluation of the standard of student work with full confidence. Marks were visible on the scripts, but some totals were not included at the end of each question or at the front of the answer book. This then raised issues with regard to verification

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

The choice of subjects offered for dissertations for students to consider gave the them opportunity to work in a range of research themes which was both topical and challenging. The method and standard of assessment was both fair and appropriate. The quality of the dissertations were very good

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?

I was present at the Full board of examiners meeting. The arrangements of the Board, and its operation was exemplary and the recommendations made for each student were fair and satisfactory

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

Yes, this was undertaken by a small committee to which the outcomes were highlighted at the full board. This was seen as appropriate since many other universities now adopt the same procedure.

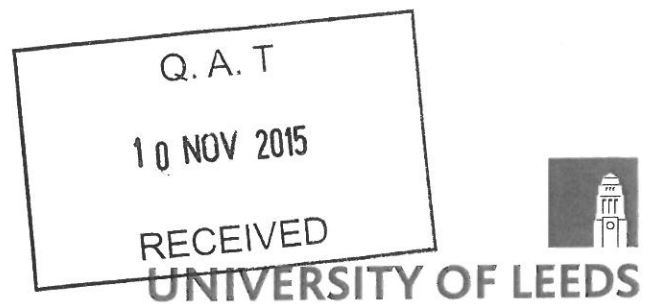
Other comments

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

Over the last four years I have placed emphasis on improving and making more robust exam script management which includes both marking, verification and transfer of marks. There has been an improvement year on year, however, the examiner believes that this could be further improved. There was still inconsistencies observed.

Faculty of Engineering

School of Chemical and Process Engineering
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT, UK



10 November 2015

Dear

External Examiner's Report 2014/15 – MSc Energy and Environment, MSc Sustainable Energy Systems, DTC/MSc Low Carbon Technologies and DTC/MSc Bioenergy

Thank you for your External Examiner's Report for the above MSc and CDT/MSc degree programmes. As usual, I have copied this to our Director of Student Education () and Head of Process Engineering ().

Once again, I would like to thank you for the very positive remarks about the content and standards of the programmes, as well as the exemplary operation of the Examinations Board and the variety and quality of research projects. Your favourable comments on the Transferable Skills modules in the CDT/MSc programmes are also welcome.

In response to your points about script management and verification, as you are aware (and have acknowledged) we have made great efforts to improve this over the past few years, although we recognise that there is still room for improvement in one or two areas. As mentioned at the Examinations Board, the School is piloting a new electronic system for dealing with all component marks next year, and it is hoped that the procedures being developed for this will eliminate any remaining issues.

This marks the conclusion of your duties for 2014/15 and completion of your 4-year appointment as External Examiner at Leeds. On behalf of the teaching staff, thank you for your efforts over this period; your input has been much appreciated and has helped to improve our quality assurance processes.

Yours sincerely

Head of School.

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