

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:	Mechanical Engineering
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Advanced Mechanical Engineering, Automotive Engineering, Oilfield Corrosion Engineering.
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?

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 programme aims and the ILOs for the programme and for the individual modules are appropriate for an MSc degree.
- 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 generally comparable with similar programmes elsewhere in the UK.
- 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 (examinations, coursework, reports, presentations) are as one would expect for an MSc programme.

The handling of draft examination papers was excellent with sufficient opportunity for EE to provide comments and receive responses, in most cases.

The marking of examination papers was clear, with evidence that checking processes had been applied. The marking of projects was rigorous with presentation, report and viva.

There was nothing in the profile of student performance which would indicate any problems with teaching or assessment methods.
- 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 student performance was broadly comparable with similar provision elsewhere in the UK for MSc courses, with the majority of students achieving a mark of 60% or more. There were a few students gaining less than 50% in each paper, but the overall success rate (for MSc) was again comparable with the sector.

There were no evident weaknesses at cohort level with the performance profile remaining relatively constant for all subjects and types of assessment.

Some modules are available to both MEng and MSc students, and the board continues to monitor the relative performance of the two groups.
- 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.

A slight concern about the standard of one paper was entirely remedied.

Examination paper checking processes were clarified and made patent in materials made available prior to Board.
- 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.

As is usual in MSc programmes, some of the specialist modules reflect the research activity of the academic staff. Research interests of staff were also evident in the project topics and many of the highest-scoring projects were clearly research-oriented.
- 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.

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?

All draft papers were provided for comment in good time. Suitable arrangements were made for comments to be considered and, in most cases, a formal response was received.

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?

A full range of assessed work was made available and this was accessibly set out and explained.

Scripts were clearly marked and annotated, and the involvement of second/collaborative markers was explicit in the paperwork provided.

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

The choice of dissertation topics was appropriate for the award. The method of assessment was rigorous and the standards were consistent with MSc dissertations elsewhere in the UK.

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 exemplary and I was given sufficient notice to enable me to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners. The Board was conducted appropriately and decisions were made in a consensual way without excessive detailed discussion. The recommendations made by the Board were entirely appropriate in all cases.

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

Not able to comment on this aspect as it applied to the particular Board.

Other comments

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

There seems to be some inconsistency in policy on marks release between Schools. If an overseas sponsor sends students to more than one School in the same University, they may find it difficult to understand why some are able to inform them of exam marks whereas others are not.

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

19 January 2016

Dear

RE: School Response to External Examiner's Report 2014/15

Thank you very much for your External Examiner's Report for the previous academic session.

Regarding the comments you make about release of marks to students, we agree that the different policies on the informal release of marks between Schools are undesirable and it would certainly be beneficial to have a common policy across the Faculty of Engineering at least. I will raise this as an issue with the Pro-Dean and Student Education Service Assessment Officer for the Faculty.

Thank you for your continuing efforts as External Examiner for the current session and we look forward to meeting you again in October.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Head of School

Professor of Solid Mechanics