

## 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:	Chemistry
Subject(s):	<i>Chemistry</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc in Chemical Biology and Drug Design
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](mailto: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*

There are no matters for urgent attention.

**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*

My experience of the MSc programme in Chemical Biology and Drug Design has been very good for the past 3 years. The staff in charge of the course are keen to improve the course year on year. Small improvements in the course organisation have enhanced the teaching and learning experience for the students and staff. The standards achieved are very good, marking and assessment procedures are really well organised. The provision of a courser for a relatively small number of students inevitably leads so some compromises as some existing courses are used. These compromises do not detract from the course content and enhance the student experience as the MSc students study with a larger group.

## 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 Learning Objectives were completely consistent with the MSc level in other UK Universities. The standards were commensurate with the MSc level at other institutions.

**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 direct comparison I make is with the MSc programme at the University of <<>> which I have been involved with for over 10 years. The Aims and ILOs were entirely comparable with the programme at the University of <<>>.

**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 included examinations, asses work and research project assessment. I checked all these methods of assessment and everything was in order.

**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 MSc students at Leeds are comparable with MSc students that I have encountered at my home University and other institutions where I have been external examiner. The strongest students take ownership of their learning and this is especially clear in research project oral presentations. The more modest students work hard but do not make an original contribution to the project. This is entirely normal, The overall ability of the cohorts that I encountered was very good.

**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.*

In the previous year I commented on the fact that the number of components in each module was different and therefore this lead to different numbers of assessment elements between modules. Progress was made on this during the past 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.*

Current research was included in the taught courses of the MSc. The major area where the students encountered current research was in the project. In several of these projects work worthy of publication was carried out.

**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**

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 for external examiners was satisfactory.

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.*

All documentation was provided on time.

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?

I was provided with draft examination papers and model answers. The nature and level of the questions was appropriate and my comments were considered, answered and where appropriate changes were made.

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 am confident in the evaluation of the standard of student work from the scripts that I checked.

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

The subjects for dissertations reflect the research going on at the University of Leeds Chemistry Department. The method of project assessment was quite touch but fair.

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?

All arrangements were satisfactory. I was able to attend the meetings and I was satisfied with the recommendations of the board.

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

Mitigating circumstances and medical evidence was considered in several cases and all procedures were appropriate.

Other comments

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

The University of Leeds is an international centre for medical chemistry and it is an ideal institution for an MSc in Chemical Biology and Drug Design. The course is excellent and I will the department all the best in the future with the MSc.

School of Chemistry

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21 December 2015

Dear

**RE: MSc Chemical Biology & Drug Design 2014/15**

I am writing on behalf of the School of Chemistry in response to your Examiner's report for 2014/15. Thank you very much for your contribution and I am glad that you have enjoyed working with us; we have certainly valued your input.

I am pleased to hear your view that the programme objectives are completely consistent with the MSc level in other UK Universities and that the standards were commensurate with the MSc level at other institutions.

Thank you also for your comments about the programme and, in particular, your comments relating to the standard of the students' research projects, several of which you noted were worthy of publication.

As your tenure as External Examiner comes to an end this session, I would like to take this opportunity once more to extend my thanks for your considered contributions and to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

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# 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:	Chemistry
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Chemical Process Research and Development
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](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

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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*

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.*

This interdisciplinary course gives an excellent foundation in understanding chemical process problems from both the engineering and chemistry standpoint, giving good experience to take forward to a career in the chemical industry. The students study a range of compulsory and optional modules as well as completing a research project. Students have opportunity not only to enhance their scientific knowledge but also to develop wider skills in writing, communication, problem-solving and time management. Overall a very interesting course.

**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 standards are appropriate for the award of MSc.

**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.*

Various methods of assessment are used including written examinations, assignments, a short oral presentation and a dissertation. All assessment was done appropriately. Both candidates performed well.

**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 various elements of the course give the students broad experience and the standards achieved were appropriate.

**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.*

This was my first year as an External Examiner for this course so cannot compare with modules given previously.

**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.*

Students do projects associated with research groups. They have a diverse range of topics to select from including synthetic/biosynthetic studies, reaction kinetics and process design and elements of secondary processing including formulation and materials chemistry. Hence the course is strongly influenced by current research.

**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.*

Sufficient material was made available to me.

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. The handbook is very informative including details of the course structure, module summaries, assessment, mentoring, feedback and management

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. Questions were sent in good time and were entirely 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 – everything was done to a high standard.

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

There were just 2 candidates and the subjects for both dissertations were appropriate. One was based on scale-up of aromatic decarboxylation of syringic acid and the other on integrated extraction-purification methods for the recovery of anthocyanins from waste skins of *Aronia melanocarpa*.

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 outstanding. I was kept fully informed of procedures, sent project presentations and I am very satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

As with the undergraduate degree programmes in chemistry in Leeds, the students are very well supported and appropriate consideration is given to any mitigating circumstances.

## Other comments

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

This is an interesting and very well run course with a good balance of taught modules and practical work in an important scientific area. It is disappointing that so few students were enrolled on the course.

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

23 February 2016

Dear

**RE: MSc Chemical Process Research and Development**

I am writing on behalf of the School of Chemistry to provide a formal response to your Examiner's report for the MSc Chemical Process and Development 2014/15.

Thank you for your considered comments, we are certainly pleased to hear your view that this is an interesting programme, strongly influenced by current research with standards appropriate to the award of MSc.

We share your concern regarding student numbers, and are actively looking to increase them as much as we can, whilst retaining standards. In addition, we are aiming to provide more of a cohort experience this year, by integrating some activities (mainly CHEM5500, the new research project module) with those for the other MSc courses taken within the Department. You will see these developments yourself when you visit later this year, and it will be very useful for the team to discuss them with you then.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Cc