

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	School of Chemical and Process Engineering
Subject(s):	Nanotechnology
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Nanotechnology
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

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?

Yes

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

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.*

A quite demanding set of programme learning outcomes due to the multidisciplinary nature of nanotechnology, but appropriate for the award of BSc.

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.*

There is not a subject benchmark for this subject, or comparable courses at this level, but very appropriate for what is normally expected at this level.

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 variety of assessment methods is what you might expect for the topics covered and the ILOs, with a mixture of exams, homework assignments, class-tests, laboratory, project and design work. All marking appeared to have been completed accurately, and reflects a good quality of teaching.

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 standards and student performance appear to be comparable with those on other similar courses that I am familiar with, including at my own University. As the number of students is small it is not possible to generalise about specific strengths or weaknesses of the programme, although I was pleased to see so many experimental research-informed final-year dissertation projects undertaken.

The exams and coursework set high expectations of students. Whilst most exam papers and module assessment strategies seems sensibly constructed, there were a small number of exam papers (e.g. CAPE3700, CAPE3711) which were rather long, with many questions and subsections, and lots of choice. Two modules (CAPE3701/5701 and CAPE5720) both appeared to have eight separate elements of coursework, which is high. A number of modules had rather low mark averages and quite high failure rates (e.g. CAPE3700 and CAPE3711). It may be useful to review whether the students are being over-assessed in these modules.

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 am not aware of any changes.

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 mentioned in section 4, I was pleased to see so many experimental final-year dissertation projects which were genuinely research-informed.

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

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. I was relieved to be told that Leeds' system of using a 20-90 mark scale was being changed, as it appeared to overcomplicate the process and was difficult to understand.

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, although I was a little confused as to exactly which modules I had responsibility for checking on the day of the June exam board, as there was work provided for one or two modules not on my list for approval at that meeting. It turned out that they were for subsequent formal consideration at the MSc exam board in October, but the modules were also taken by some undergraduates.

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. It was good to see that all my (minor) comments on draft exam papers were acted on.

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?

Quite a few mark sheets were missing for the Nanotechnology individual dissertation reports (CMNS3000) which made it difficult to be confident in the marking. Mark sheets should be provided for all project reports seen. Also no samples of work were provided for CMNS2000 and CMNS3100, and it was unclear why not. Other than that, sufficient examples of marked work was provided, and all marked work was clearly annotated and accurately marked.

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

Very good choice of dissertation topics. Real research-informed projects as well. Appeared to be assessed at correct level, but difficult to be certain in all cases due missing mark sheets (see above).

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, communication about arrangements was excellent, and everything was run smoothly and efficiently on the day.

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

QA Team received 01/06/2017

1 June 2017

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Dear <<>>,

BSc Nanotechnology – 2015/16

We are very pleased with your comments about the BSc Nanotechnology course, in particular the comment that this multidisciplinary course sets high expectations for the students and that you were pleased to observe so many experimental research-informed final-year dissertation projects undertaken. We will review the exam format and the assessment loads for the modules you mention in the report. Furthermore, we apologise for some mark sheets being missing (e.g. for the final year projects) which arose because an archived file went missing on the day and as a stop gap we hastily assembled copies of just the projects themselves. We will ensure this does not happen next year.

There are no other substantial points raised which require any comment.

We are very grateful for you taking the time to oversee this Undergraduate course: 2016-17 will be the final year the course will run.

Yours sincerely

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Head of School