

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Engineering / Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc / various (7 programmes in total)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Good practice is employed at all stages of the examination process.

Enhancements made from the previous year

For the external examiners, a sample of projects in paper form was provided – see last year's request to do this, which was due to the poor quality (and last year, the unavailability) of the electronic viewing system. This was very helpful indeed, not least given the short time that the examiners have to sample-scrutinise the material.

Matters for Urgent Attention

There is, I believe, a need to explore how to improve the calibration of project marking. Sampling of this year's projects showed some possible inconsistencies in project marks both near class boundaries and also within class ranges. I did not recommend any adjustments, but did observe that in a few cases the marks looked – in comparing one project with another – to be wrong. A possible way ahead is to have a small group of academics from across the range of topics to act as calibrators, and to record any changes that they recommend to the original marks. This could be a relatively lightweight process, but an important one.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	N/A
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	N/A
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	N

First of all, it has to be said that the process was already in good shape when I started as external examiner. The changes I have recommended were relatively small and procedural up till now. This year's recommendation is more significant, I would suggest.

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
The standards of teaching and examining in EEE at Leeds are high and highly satisfactory.		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
In common with other Universities in this field, it is normal for the academics' research interests to influence the choice of topics in the syllabus, especially for optional courses, and also of course with the project topics that are made available to the students.		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N/A
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N/A
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
Accreditation of at least some parts of the programmes is done by the IET – and I gather that there is an upcoming visit by that body's accreditation panel.		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
As far as I could tell, this is correct.		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
I believe so.		
N/A		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y*
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y**
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y***
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * I received papers appropriate to my part of the syllabus, and the other external examiner likewise. • ** Yes, generally, but see Matters for Urgent Attention earlier in this report. • *** This aspect is one I commend highly in the EEE Dept. 		

Other comments

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

N/A

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Director of Student Education

Faculty of Engineering / School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering

School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering,
The University of Leeds
Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9JT

*If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.

Completing the School response

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at qat@leeds.ac.uk. External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

We are pleased that our delivery of taught programmes is considered to demonstrate good practice.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We were keen to respond to the feedback from last year's report concerning the presentation of student projects in electronic format, and we are pleased that the new approach taken this year was considered to be more efficient.

Response to Matters for Urgent Attention

If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:

We have already acted on the feedback concerning project marking and we are proposing two changes for the current session. The first, is to adopt a form of 'training' for all staff involved with grading project reports to ensure more consistent interpretation of the marking rubric. The second change is to separate the oral examination from the report. This is somewhat experimental, and is partly motivated by the need to reduce the number of oral examinations that take place as late as September. We propose to hold the oral examination 2-3 weeks before the reports are submitted, based on a presentation by the student outlining their achievements. We hope that this will also make the subsequent report marking more objective, instead of being influenced by the student's performance in the oral examination.

We would, however, add a further observation to the point that the External Examiners' sampling of projects tends, inevitably, to be based on the written report alone. Where students have achieved a high level of technical accomplishments, but performed less well in terms of their ability to write a competent technical report, the marks may, at first glance, appear to be out of alignment with moderated norms. Similarly, some reports may give the impression that more has been achieved than actually was, and the overall module mark may have already taken this into account.

Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We appreciate the commendation of our processes, and we have noted the specific recommendation concerning the marking of projects (as above).

Standards

Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We are pleased that the School's teaching and assessment procedures are judged to be of a high quality.

Assessment and Feedback

Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We note the External Examiner's confirmation that the overall assessment and feedback processes are satisfactory and appropriate.

The Progression and Awards Process

Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We note the External Examiner's confirmation that the procedures in place for viewing examination papers, students' scripts and project reports, and especially for the conduct of the Progression and Awards Board, are all satisfactory.

Other comments

Response to items included in the 'Other Comments' section of the report