

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016– 2017

QAT Received 30/04/2018

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, Aerospace Engineering.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:

Institution:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

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

The content of the programme has not changed substantially over the 4 years of tenure, but the processes have continuously improved in terms of their robustness and efficiency. Positive changes in delivery methods have also taken place. Particularly notable are the provision of material through the VLE, including video-or audio-records of lectures as an additional reference, and the handling of the assessment of projects. This latter development has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of project assessment and feedback, allowing the teaching group to cope with the continually growing numbers of students on the programme.

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.*

Overall, the programme aims and ILOs are at MSc level. Some specialist modules have tailored entry points to ensure accessibility for a wide range of students, but these still provide Masters level challenges.

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 comparable with similar programmes elsewhere in the UK, and are compatible with the HEQ Framework. The standards are also compatible with IMechE benchmarks.

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 are entirely appropriate to the learning outcomes of the modules, with examinations, coursework, reports and presentations all being used.

The marking of examination papers was clear and fair, and an arithmetic tracking sheet was used. The marking of projects was thorough and transparent, involving presentation, report and viva. A clear checklist and marks breakdown were provided adhered to by all markers. In the current year a Faculty-wide app has been used to facilitate the management of project marking and this appears to have had an overall benefit on the consistency and auditability of marking, as well as facilitating feedback to students.

There was nothing systematic in the student performance which would indicate any problems with teaching or assessment methods, or in the accessibility of the subject matter.

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 as one would expect for an MSc course with multiple specialisms and some common core modules.

The performance profile for all subjects and types of assessment does not indicate any imbalance in challenge and/or volume between 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.

The process for assessing projects is worthy of wider dissemination. The use of three elements of assessment at the formation, interim and final stages, supported by an app that records performance and feedback at each stage is exemplary, and shows that it is possible to deal with large numbers of projects without loss of assessment rigour.

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.

Many of the specialist modules reflect the research activity of the academic staff. Research interests of staff were also evident in the project topics and it is clear that students benefit from this in having access to leading edge laboratories and research groups.

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. Suitable arrangements were made for comments to be considered, although it was not always clear how or whether the comments had been taken into account.

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 clearly laid out for scrutiny prior to the board.

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

The projects were made available with the associated marking detail being provided in electronic files. All project assessors had followed the (exemplary) procedure for marking and there was very little discrepancy in the (double-blind) marking.

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