

# The University of Leeds

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

QA Team received 23/06/2017

### Part A: General Information

#### Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Mechanical Engineering
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Mechanical, Automotive, and Mech with Nuclear Programmes
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BEng, MEng

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

#### Points of innovation and/or good practice

*Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.*

Programmes/processes follow best practice in many ways.  
I particularly note that many pieces of course work have been marked electronically, including feedback annotations.

#### Enhancements made from the previous year

*Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.*

Review process for Externals on the day of the Exam Board eased significantly by less reliance on the VLE, in particular by making samples of coursework available in hardcopy. Also the summary of the programme structure is very helpful.

#### 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

#### For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

#### 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?	Y

7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	N
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*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*

Over the 4 years of my appointment I have seen that my comments have always been taken seriously and appropriate changes made, and these changes have been explained clearly to me. The programme structure has always been good and so has only been refined in detail. Some modules which were causing issues have been replaced or redesigned. I believe there has been a gradual increase in student attainment over the period, commensurate with increased entry grades.

Processes have been improved for external examination. A template for draft exam feedback was introduced. On the day of the exam board, the process for navigating through the VLE to find marks has been clarified, and now in many cases avoided by the provision of sample hardcopies of coursework.

## 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

*Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.*

The programmes' ILO's are comparable with those of other highly regarded universities and meet the requirements of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. The structure of the programmes follow best practice.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
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*Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)*

Students undertake substantial projects in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year which are linked to the research activities and interests of staff.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
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*Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:*

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
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*Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:*

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
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*Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:*

Programmes fully meet engineering institution requirements.

## Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: 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.</i></p> <p><i>An appropriate mix of coursework and examinations is used for assessment. Substantial coursework elements (projects) are double marked (blind) and there is a robust moderation process. Examination setting, marking and checking follows University QA processes.</i></p>		
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
<p><i>Please comment on 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:</i></p> <p>Exam and coursework assessments are all present the right level of challenge, and assess the full range of learning. The marking standards appear to be fair, consistent and reliable.</p>		
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

## The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners 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

*Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:*

The exam board was executed in an efficient and professional manner. Mitigating circumstances and plagiarism offences had been clearly identified and the appropriate actions taken.

#### Other comments

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

On the day of the exam board, I was able to inspect a wide range of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year project reports. The projects set were of all of high standard, and the marking was consistent and with good differentiation (a broad range of marks). It is important that sufficient opportunities are given to students for practical design/build and experimental engineering work as part of their projects, which also requires investment to maintain adequate technician support with growing student numbers.

The exam scripts inspected nearly all followed procedures in terms of marking and checking. In a few cases the total mark was not clearly stated on the front of each exam script. Non-integer marks were also given in a few cases. The checking process, and any subsequent corrections, were documented for each exam.

Module marks were quite high in second year (three modules with means at 72% or higher) – nevertheless as all students take these there is no issues of fairness. The disparity of means in some option modules (M level) that was noted last year has not reoccurred.

The draft MECH3460 Robotics and Machine Intelligence paper arrived very late and was a lower quality than the other exam papers. One aspect that I have commented on in my exam paper feedback several times is that the formula sheet should be a succinct list of formulae rather than a long collection of figures/equations/derivations from the notes.

It is pleasing to see an increasing number of students undertaking year-long placements as this is an exceptionally valuable supplement to their academic studies.

**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>
Address for communication:	University of Leeds, LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

\*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](mailto: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 very pleased with the positive comments about our system for electronic marking of coursework and the view that the exam board process is very effective.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

We are pleased that the summary of the programme structure provided last year and the fact that the Examiner feels that his comments are always taken seriously.

**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:

**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:

**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 apologise for the poor quality of the MECH3460 exam paper. We have provided additional administrative support to ensure that this is improved next year.

**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:

In a few cases the total mark was not clearly stated and non-integer marks returned – we will remind colleagues of the need to state total marks clearly and of the need to return only integer marks.  
Formulae should be given in a succinct list of formulae – in the module in question there will only be one page of formulae attached in future.

### 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:*

### Other comments

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