

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:	School of Chemistry
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Polymers, Colorants and Fine Chemicals
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PGCert/PGDip/MSc

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. A key example of good practice is the topics offered for the Extended Laboratory project. These draw on the research experience of the academic staff and are typically of applied nature dealing with industrially relevant products and processes.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

There were no modifications to the programme this year.

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

N/A

For Examiners in the first year of appointment..... N/A

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

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

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

It is pleasing to note that the number of students enrolled on the programme increased annually from six in 2013/14 to eighteen in 2016/17. There have been some changes to the module content, namely the replacement of the 'Advanced Programme Learning in Organic Chemistry' module by 'Case Studies in Fine Chemicals and Pharmaceutical Synthesis'. The most significant enhancement, however, has been the replacement of the 75 credit Extended Research Project with a 90 credit Extended Laboratory Project. I have been particularly impressed by the high quality of the dissertations produced by the students for this module and it is clear from their oral presentations that the students this element of the course and that they have a sound understanding for the subject. The success rate has been high over the entire 4-year period and this year has been exceptional with eight students passing with distinction and ten with merit.

I have been generally impressed by the professionalism of the staff involved with this course. I was sent draft copies of examination papers and model answers well in advance and the awarding of marks has always been clear on reviewing examination scripts.

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
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>This is a well-designed cohesive course which is delivered by experienced and highly qualified staff. It has an applied chemistry focus and consists of a 90 credit project, 1x30 credit and 3x15 credit modules plus one optional 15 credit module which is common with another MSc programme. The Department is recognised internationally for its expertise in colour chemistry and this area is thoroughly addressed in the Advanced Colour Science (15credits) and Colour Application Technology (30credits) modules as well as the project. The overall aims and intended learning outcomes are entirely appropriate and are commensurate with a Masters level programme.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>The topics for the Extended Laboratory Project draw on the research expertise of the academic staff involved in delivering the project.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

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>The main method for assessment for the taught modules was by written examination. I was provided with draft copies of the questions and model answers in advance and these were entirely appropriate for a masters level course. The marks for the Project were awarded based on the literature review, experimental work, reporting and discussion of results and also the students were required to give an oral presentation. I was able to view examination scripts for three of the modules [5180M, 5162M and 5244M] and was provided with copies of all of the dissertations. It was noted that dissertations were double marked and in cases where marks varied significantly a third assessor was appointed. I was very impressed by the standard of written work produced by the students and this is clearly indicative of the high quality of teaching.</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>This year there was a particularly strong cohort of students. Out of the 18 students enrolled, 8 passed with distinction and 10 passed with merit. Marks for the Extended Laboratory Project were particularly high (62-84%). The academic standard is consistent with masters level courses delivered on comparable courses at other UK Universities.</p> <p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i> Examination scripts and dissertations were annotated to indicate why marks were / were not awarded for particular questions.</p>		

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?	N/A
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i>		

Other comments

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

1st December 2017

Dear

RE: MSc Polymers, Colorants and Fine Chemicals 2016/17

I am writing on behalf of the School of Chemistry to provide a formal response to your Examiner's report for 2016/17.

I was very pleased to hear that you feel the programme objectives are commensurate with the award of a Master's degree and also, are of the expected standard of courses offered by other Universities in the area. I was also pleased to see your comments on the quality of the extended laboratory project module.

In line with the University's new procedures, I enclose a copy of your report, together with (in part C) our detailed responses.

On a final note, 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

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Head of School	
Chemistry	

*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

Thank you for the complementary comments about the Extended Laboratory project. We are pleased to note that students also had good feedback regarding this module in the PGT programme survey.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

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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:

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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:

Thank you for the complementary comments. We have also been pleased to see the increased numbers of students on the programme.

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:

Thank you for the complementary comments.

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:

Thank you for the complementary comments. Marks were high this year but, as noted, this was a particularly strong cohort of students. Some students commented on the assessment of the programme in the PGT programme

survey (in particular, suggesting that different forms of assessment might be used, but that deadlines needed to be scheduled carefully such that they did not fall all at once: these are issues that we are reviewing for the coming year.

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