

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 Food Science and Nutrition
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	FOOD5016M, 5405M, 5055M, 5071M, 5115M, 5125M, 5206M, 5235M, 5241M, 5270M, 5405M, 5445M, 5472M, 5481M.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc Food Science, MSc Food Science (Biotechnology) and MSc Food Quality and Innovation

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.

There are innovative elements of assessment as well, particularly in the integrated (or "capstone") modules which in my opinion are very beneficial to the programme.

Other elements mentioned in previous years:

- 1) the high quality of the final year project work and the support offered. I found excellent projects in many different areas of research, from colloidal science (which was to be expected) to optical systems and nutrition.
- 2) the ability given to the student to choose different profiles that will yield specialisations. The student's choice allow to accommodate different professional profiles in one MSc programme.
- 3) the integration of the product development project and the multidisciplinary approach taken provides students with an excellent opportunity to develop the NPD skills.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Marking schemes for some of the modules were provided and this has facilitated enormously the work of the two external examiners.

Extensive student feedback comments have been provided this year in the June visit and this also has been very helpful for the external reviewing team to promote a strong discussion on the programmes.

The academic teams leading the programmes has also started to discuss the problems of group thinking, question picking and specific module performance that became more evident during the last years.

There is a significant inclusion of scholar citations and research articles in the integrated and research projects.

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

There are no matters of urgent attention to the programme.

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 an 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 an External Examiner Mentor?	Y

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 programme teams have reacted appropriately to the comments we made in the previous years and where appropriate they have developed improvements to the delivery.

I've served this year as mentor for the new external examiner of the programme, . I have to say that this has been a collaborative work and that has taken very duties without any issue and I believe that is fully competent to serve term as external examiner.

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 programme learning outcomes are appropriate for the award intended and the content of the programme and structure provides the students with an excellent learning opportunity, both in diversity (with the different options) and in depth (reflected in the application of research expertise in the advanced training of students).

The standards and student achievement is of high level and demonstrate the work of a group with a high commitment towards the student achievement.

The programme aims and ILOs are of equivalent if not superior level than equivalent programmes nationally and internationally.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
-----	---	---

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)

A clear fingerprint of the School's research is reflected in the structure, content and delivery of the programme, both in the modules and the final year projects executed by the students.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

I am not aware that the MSc programmes are part of the PhD pathway, however they could sit the basis of an integrated PhD in the School without problem. I understand that most of the research areas of the School

are represented in the programmes, however a small exercise for the benefit of recently appointed staff might be beneficial if this was to be taken.

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
-----	--	---

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)?	N
-----	--	---

Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

I haven't been made aware of any accreditation process.

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
-----	---	-------

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've revised the exam scripts prior to si and sii for the season 16/17 and during my annual visit I have reviewed the marking of students of exams and projects during my visit.

I had an opportunity to meet the head of studies of the School and to discuss my observations/comments of this review. Further to that I have met with several lecturers regarding the marking and classification of the students.

Based on the visit and the meetings, it is my opinion that the programme has rigorous methods of assessment, which are complete and address the ILOs and that the School has an appropriate structure to manage the quality improvement of this process.

The arrangements for the marking of modules are appropriate and the classification of awards is assessed with careful attention to each individual student and with fairness.

The academic breath and level of achievement of the graduates of the programmes is very high, as indicated by their ability to respond complex exam questions and to develop integrated projects in their areas. As such there are several examples of good practice that I've identified and discussed with the Head of Studies of the School. IN the same way, I've found some small evidence of duplication, further discussion to this has clarified any aspect of this to my satisfaction.

The integrated product development and the research project showcase a high level of integration of the training and the ability of the students to use the skills.

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
-----	---	---

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:

The academic performance demonstrated by these students is of equivalent if not superior level than other programmes I have experience of internationally.

This specific cohort 16-17 from the MSc Food Quality and Innovation is slightly weaker than other years.

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

The performance of students in some of the examination questions in some specific modules (as discussed in the June visit) was very low. There is a pointer to students picking questions and/or students not expecting or being prepared for some of the questions. This is in agreement with student feedback reviewed.

--

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
<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

C1: Students would benefit from **solved exam questions and exam mocks** to see level of expectation where exam style/structure changes in a module. Identifying students with language difficulties before the semester I is finished is important. SII modules and the project will be at risk.
C2: The **feedback on SI** exam is very important and students that have access to the exam script and feedback or were helped to understand how to build a model answer did appreciate that.
C3: Students have benefited from **Seminar/Discussions** where **critical appraisal** happens at MSc Level. They suggest increasing those activities for the next year.
C4: Where modules are taught by more than one lecturer it is the responsibility of each lecturer (not only the module leader) to define very clearly to the students the **exact level of expectation in the exam** and style to their own section. Significant **differences in consistency** of the student achievement expected

between sections of an exam script will confuse students if this is not managed appropriately by the School.

C5. Students would benefit from a **calendar of assessment** (or any other planning) that would allow for assessments to be spaced within the year and avoid student overload.

C6. MSc Nutrition runs a **reading club** with research journals. It seems a model of good practice that could be translated to other MSc's. the students commented that they already have done research journal reading in the undergraduate degree, and that this activity should focus on the higher level skills and critical appraisal.

C7: Students met also agreed that either continuous assessment needs to gain bigger weight within the module assessment. This comment might not be appropriate or suitable for all modules/programmes.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	School of Food Science and Nutrition
Address for communication:	School of Food Science and Nutrition University of Leeds Leeds LS29JT
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 gat@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

The School has been developing and reviewing assessment methods, so your note on the inclusion of innovative assessment is encouraging.

The School regards the research project and the product development project as flagship modules in the MSc programmes and your recognition of these modules as best practice is appreciated.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Provision of marking schemes or guide answers from School Staff has improved massively, and great efforts are being made for this to improve so that all modules have guide answers provided at the time of paper setting rather than at the time of marking.

It is pleasing to hear that the summary feedback for module examinations was very useful and the School aim is that all modules and all questions will have such feedback reports.

The School has introduced an examination preparation and expectation seminar to counter groups preparing an answer or individuals preparing answers to specific questions and giving that answer regardless of the question on the paper.

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:

N/A

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 acting as a mentor to _____, and it is pleasing to hear that the mentorship has been collaborative and that you regard _____ to be fully competent after only one academic session.

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:

It is encouraging that you have identified the aims and LO of the programmes as not only comparable to other programmes but are possibly superior to many equivalent programmes.

As you know it is the University aim to include research based teaching across all programmes, so your recognition of the School's research being reflected in the structure, content and delivery of the programme makes the School confident that the programmes are meeting expectations.

The MSc programmes are not part of an integrated PhD programme, but many of our students do continue to PhD study – so as you have pointed out the programmes do serve as a pathway to PhD study.

The STSEC will discuss how to introduce recently appointed staff to research based teaching in the School.

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:

The programmes for which you are External Examiner have only recently been accredited by the IFST (Institute for Food Science and Technology)

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:

It will be encouraging to colleagues, both academic and administrative, to note that you are happy with the progression and awards process in the School.

Other comments

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

C1: many modules do have examination sessions at the end of the module where exam questions are solved, and this or provision of some solved examples will be encouraged in modules where this is not the case. The question of mocks is interesting as the School has in the past (when all examinations were in the summer) had mock examinations for MSc students, however the workload for staff and students with mocks in addition to exams and coursework was too great. It is however something that we can discuss at STSEC. We are able to identify students with language difficulties in semester 1, what has been difficult is how to remedy this – those students who have been advised to attend language lessons often give them up by the end of semester 1 because it is viewed as extra work. The School continually tries to find acceptable solutions and we are currently liaising with colleagues in the language centre as how to better support our international students in their language skills.

C2: The School does encourage all students to see personal tutors for such examination feedback and will renew efforts to encourage more students to access this feedback.

C3: This suggestion will be discussed at STSEC as it may be that such critical appraisal sessions might replace some of the present assessment.

C4: Variability in expectation should not occur between most lecturers in a shared module, but if there is a difference due to the material being delivered there will be an instruction to ensure that students are aware of expectations in examination answers.

C5: this has been supplied in the past and was not used by the students – however, work is going on to produce a simple calendar of assessments to help students plan their work (and to identify any assessment deadline build up). This will also be aided by instructing lecturers not to extend deadlines which has led to assessment build up at particular times.

C6: This suggestion will be taken to STSEC to discuss if and how this can be incorporated in other modules.

C7: The School is reviewing assessment and mark weighting and student comments will be considered as part of the process.