

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Mathematics
Subject(s):	<i>Statistics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Statistics MSc Statistics with Applications to Finance MSc Medical Statistics MSc Data Science and Analytics
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	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.

Almost all staff are very efficient and helpful.

The website on ideas for improving your teaching is helpful. It is interesting to see the range of dissertations.

Processes for modules which are examined in January and the summer are largely addressed in the UG report.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Change in timing so I could read scripts. (See UG report)

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

Marking: See UG report

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

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

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>The ranges of modules and dissertations is sensible.</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 modules allow staff to reflect the research interests of staff. Dissertations are informed by research interests.</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> <p>I am not aware of accreditation by Royal Statistical Society; this might be my omission.</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>Yes, though I think it would be good to increase the use of real world data if possible.</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>The assessments allow a range of achievements to be distinguished. The performance is comparable with students on other courses.</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> <p>Students might mark the draft background chapters of each others dissertations. It can be useful for students to try to mark other students exercises or assignments (possibly anonymised). It is often easier for us to recognise lack of clarity of expression or mistakes made by others rather than ourselves. If students have to provide a written explanation of the marks they give, they really have to think about what is required. (c.f UG comments)</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 /N
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p>		

Other comments

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

Thank you for efficient administrative support.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	<i>Mathematics</i>
Address for communication:	School of Mathematics, University of Leeds, 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 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

We are grateful to _____ for _____ comments on the helpfulness of our staff and our efforts to improve student education; we will continue trying to provide our students with the best possible educational outcomes.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We are pleased to hear that the change in visit arrangements has improved matters. We continue to look at our arrangements and are adjusting them for next year to improve their fit with the exams processes.

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:

Relating to the checking of exam scripts: We had in the past, for internal purposes, asked transcription checkers to provide a count of the number of errors they found in a stack of exam scripts, but moved away from this recently. We will be reinstating this as a simple way to provide external examiners with reassurance that the checking has been done accurately. This will be done by adding two boxes to our marksheet, to record the number of errors in marking and the number of transcription errors.

We do instruct markers to enter marks in the format suggested by _____, and have processes in place to check that this is happening, so we are concerned that _____ has identified cases where this has not happened. In the future we will be asking external examiners to raise any such cases with us at their visit, so that

we can investigate and rectify them, as well as instructing examiners and checkers for the future.

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:

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 suggestion to introduce peer marking for preliminary stages of MSc projects is an interesting one. We as a School have recently introduced peer marking to our undergraduate programmes. We will look into ways of implementing this also at the MSc level.

We will pass _____ suggestion to make more extensive use of real world data on to staff directly involved in the Statistics MSc.

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