

**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 Physics and Astronomy
Subject(s):	<i>Board of Examiners Meetings</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Physics and Business Management
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MPhys

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

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

*There is only a small cohort and the interaction between the teaching staff and the students seems very good. I appreciated that the students were able to pick their own dissertation projects.*

**Enhancements made from the previous year**

*This is the first time the programme has been run.*

**Matters for Urgent Attention**

*n/a*

**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?	n/a
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?	Y / N
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y / N
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y / N
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	Y / 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*

**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)?	??
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
<i>Being a Masters level programme, there is more choice than in a u/g programme, and I support the idea that the students have more freedom to choose the modules they are interested in. On the other hand, the organisers should reflect on the choice of modules on offer and whether they fit into the "Physics &amp; Business" context – e.g. "General Relativity".</i>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	N
<i>The choice of projects could be more closely related to the research topics of academics in the department.</i>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD: This would not be my first choice of MPhys for a PhD, and I don't think it should.</i>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here: n/a</i>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here: n/a</i>		

### Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
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
<i>The students reached a good level of attainment despite starting off as a rather diverse cohort.</i>		
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i>		

### 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
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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

A few issues became apparent during the discussions;

- a) Two students were seriously delayed by long delays in obtaining an ethics approval. This delay was caused by sickness of an administrator. While such absence cannot be predicted, the ethical approval process should be reviewed to avoid such a single point of failure.
- b) It would be good to see more physics content in the dissertations.
- c) There seem to be timetable clashes, so again, the number and nature of taught modules on offer to these particular students should be reviewed.

**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	

\*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**

Thank you for your comments regarding the working relationship between staff and students. In the first year of the programme, having a small cohort really helped us to know the students well and deal with any issues quickly and effectively.  
Students enjoyed having the opportunity to focus on a project of personal interest.

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

n/a

**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 your comments regarding the choice of modules. In particular, being able to offer a sufficient number of physics modules to allow real choice (especially when pre-requisites are taken into account) has presented some challenges. We will look closely at each of the modules on offer and ensure they fit the remit of having relevance to a high-technology business environment, as per the original aims of 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:

We are pleased that the standards for the programme are considered as commensurate with similar programmes elsewhere.  
The programme is not accredited by the Institute of Physics because they do not accredit MSc programmes.

## 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:*

As you have noted, we were also pleased that the range of teaching and assessment methods allowed a diverse cohort of students to be successful on the programme.

## 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**

We note the comment regarding the shortcomings of the University's ethical review process, and will escalate this point to the appropriate University service via the Quality Assurance Team.

During the first year of the programme, we were open minded about the nature of the dissertations that the students could develop. We were keen that the students led the development of their project briefs, and that they chose a subject that they were passionate about. However, this led to some projects being more business than physics focused. In future years, we will give the students a stronger steer towards Physics in a business context, rather than business focused projects. For 2017/18, students will take a 'research methods' module in the business school, with regular meetings in Physics, to ensure more robust and suitable project brief design.

Having a wide range of module choices often comes at the price of a clashing timetable. We work closely with the Business School team to try to have a selection of modules that work. Having lecture capture alleviates some of the problems, however this is not an ideal solution. For 2017/18, we increased the number of compulsory modules (adding the Current Research Topics in Physics module) so that they will have less clashes in the timetable. This module is flexible in itself (drawing from our research colloquia) so affords the students more flexibility.

We would like to say thank you for your support and advice regarding the programme.