

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 25/06/2018.

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Faculty of Engineering, School of Chemical and Process Engineering
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>Chemical Engineering, Chemical and Energy Engineering, Chemical and Materials Engineering, Chemical and Nuclear Engineering, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Engineering, Food Process Engineering</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	MEng and BEng version of above programmes (it is a lot of individual programmes and potential modules so I haven't listed them).
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	BEng, MEng and Alternative Qualifications

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.
The clarity of marking and checking was very high.

And continuing from last year:

A lot of exam questions were marked out of 20, I felt this led to really good consistency across different module exam papers and easy to see the credit workload balance and timings for the exams.

Ability to offer individual MEng research projects, it is excellent to be able to have the range of projects on offer.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
The checking processes were much clearer (see above).

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
No.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses 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 / 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
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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

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y / N
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y / N
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y / N

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

The programmes offered are clearly closely aligned with the IChemE accreditation guidance (as the relevant courses are accredited), so the course structures and modules felt familiar.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
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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)

In the range of design and research projects offered it is clear that the research strengths of the school are used.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / 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?	Y / 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 / N
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

The course (in its primary Chemical Engineering incarnation) is strongly aligned to the IChemE guidelines, so I would expect it to meet these requirements with ease.

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
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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 felt in places the course was over assessed. A good balance between coursework and examination is presented and there is plenty of opportunity for students to get feedback on both formative and summative assessed work. There was clear alignment between assessment and ILOs.		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	<u>Y</u> / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	<u>Y</u> / N
<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 standard of work reviewed was comparable to work produced on similar programmes at my home institution</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>A lot of feedback and other elements associated with assessment are handled via the VLE which I don't have access to. Reviewing central IT policy around external assessors involved in QA activity access to this could be beneficial. Being able to access the VLE and see how it has been used would give a more complete picture of the course and also enable me to understand certain issues that may be raised more clearly.</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?	<u>Y</u> / N
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	<u>Y</u> / N
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	<u>Y</u> / N
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	<u>Y</u> / N
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	<u>Y</u> / N
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	<u>Y</u> / N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	<u>Y</u> / N
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	<u>Y</u> / N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	<u>Y</u> / N
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	<u>Y</u> / N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	<u>Y</u> / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	<u>Y</u> / N
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	<u>Y</u> / N
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	<u>Y</u> / N
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	<u>Y</u> / N

35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:		

Other comments

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

Again I would commend the school overall on their assessment processes. Again meeting with the staff I was made to feel very welcome and all were very open to queries and willing to explain what went on in their courses/modules.

However the students I met this year were not as complimentary. This of course may be just a numbers thing (I met 5 students from a graduating cohort of 200+), but they had a number of concerns around how certain modules and aspects of the course had run.

Some further general comments, not all related to the examination/assessment side:

- (i) Some modules/programmes still have very small numbers on them. My understanding is that a course review is underway in part to restructure to help minimise this type of issue. It was a point raised by the students I met on the smaller programmes that they didn't feel particularly included, and where an afterthought for certain things.
- (ii) Two members of staff (for module Cape 5330 Advanced Reactions) and were singled out for praise by the students, and so if possible using them or similar staff to help mentor and explain to the wider staff body how they approach their taught student interaction, may help alleviate some of the concerns raised by the students I met.
- (iii) The clarity around exam marking and checking this year was very good (particularly Cape 3311) for almost all modules. There was the odd module that was still a little different (e.g. Cape 5340, which appeared to have a question (qu 3) negatively marked, and had more comments on it – not that I mind these as an external).
- (iv) The students highlighted an issue with Cape 5300 around the examination and details of its format (it had changed this year from being a class test previously), where they believed they had been told it would be multiple choice and it was primarily short answer questions. On review of the module results as a whole, there was no significant problem, but clearly clarity of communication to the students in this type of area in particular is very important.
- (v) A student raised a concern around Cape 5790, particularly around its organisation and the initial class test. Again there was no significant problem with the module results as a whole.
- (vi) An issue around research project selection was raised, particularly with students on 'and' programmes potentially missing out on projects in their area of study to ones on the general Chemical Engineering course. On speaking with the staff this would look to have been resolved for subsequent years.
- (vii) There would appear to be some very good work going on around feedback, but the staff may need to be more careful with the language used and how the students interpret some of this – interestingly the students used the word 'support' a lot, when I would have said they were talking about feedback and feedforward (in terms of using the feedback for the next relevant assignment). Using personal tutorials or other mechanisms to help relate this to NSS language and interpretation may help the good work done be valued in these types of survey.
- (viii) The students noted that the computer cluster within Chemical Engineering was often booked out for general University teaching. Given there is specialist software only available in that cluster the University may need to consider some form of prioritisation so that students with coursework deadlines can access the tools required to complete the work.
- (ix) From a checking perspective for the projects having some indication how the marks breakdown would be useful – if I had access to the VLE then it would be something I could see there. However it can probably be resolved in other ways as well.
- (x) For each module examination it would be useful to have the exam paper and mark scheme a long with the checking documents – some modules had this, others didn't (or I didn't open the right bag to find them).

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Chemical Engineering, Chemical and Energy Engineering, Chemical and Materials Engineering, Chemical and Nuclear Engineering, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Engineering, Food Process Engineering

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MEng and BEng version of above programmes (it is a lot of individual programmes and potential modules so I haven't listed them).

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

BEng, MEng and Alternative Qualifications

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Director of Student Education

Faculty / School of:

Engineering / Chemical and Process Engineering

Address for communication:

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 is pleased to see that the hard work that has been carried out in the past year on revising module assessments and marking schemes has had visible results. We will be continuing this process throughout the next year and hope that will be able to see further improvements.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The School has ensured that clear and precise advice was circulated to all staff and that marking that fell short of the standard was dealt with quickly. We are pleased to see that _____ has recognised this.

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:

The School is pleased to see that _____ has not identified any issues for urgent attention.

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:

n/a

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:

The School is pleased to see that _____ has provided a positive response to questions 8 to 16, which can be taken as an endorsement of the strength of our programme. _____ has identified the close alignment with accreditation (which is an important link) and the quality of our research led teaching on research projects.

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 School is pleased to see that _____ has provided a positive response to questions 17 to 19, as these are the areas where a majority of our improvements are being targeted. We agree that there are over assessed portions of the programmes and are part way through a review of assessment across all modules and years to reduce the level of assessment and specifically target assessment against learning outcomes.
With respect to access to Minerva; as we move to more electronic assessment and marking we will have to ensure that External Examiners have access. This is not seen as a School issue, but one that is common across the Faculty and therefore should have a Faculty response.

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:

The School is pleased to see that _____ has provided a positive response to questions 20 to 35.

Other comments

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

In response to _____ specific comments:

- (i) A major programme review is under way and will remove modules with low numbers in the future.
- (ii) We will look to share best practice in our next teaching session.
- (iii) Negative marking is not School policy and we ensure that it does not happen again.
- (iv) This issue was investigated and dealt prior to the Exam boards.
- (v) This issue was investigated and dealt prior to the Exam boards.
- (vi) We will be revising the project selection process to ensure better alignment of students with research topics next year.
- (vii) Best practice in feedback, especially around efficient and timely marking using rubrics is being shared and staff are being offered training.
- (viii) This issue has been raised at FTSEC and unfortunately is outside of control of the School. There is a misapprehension that the cluster is owned by CAPE, when in fact it is University space. Having said that, the cluster is open and available to students 24/7 and while general university teaching hours are normally 9am-4pm.
- (ix) We will ensure that _____ has access to full marking schemes for project work next visit.
- (x) We will ensure that _____ has access exam papers and marking schemes next visit.