

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 26/10/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Civil Engineering, FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

Subject(s):

MSc (Eng) Advanced Concrete Technology

Programme(s) / Module(s):

CIVE5451M Constituent Materials of Concrete
CIVE5452M Cement and Concrete Properties
CIVE5453M Repair of Concrete Structures
CIVE5454M Concrete Production
CIVE5455M Individual Research

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. Intelligent MCQs with feedback are novel and useful.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

First cohort graduating this year, so little changes made.

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

None.

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 (but N/A)
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	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

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

This was the first year of students graduating, but there appear to have been few if any teething problems

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>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>Design is appropriate, and facilitates student learning and development. Modules are in a sensible order</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p>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)</p> <p>This is exemplary and a real positive of this MSc. The course Director is a leader in the field, and the lectures available online are also from leaders in the field. Latest developments inform much of the content. The research project at the end is the best example, being supervised by excellent researchers, with ongoing feedback.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD: N/A</p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y
<p>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here: N/A</p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
<p>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here: ICT institute of concrete technology. The course director works closely with the ICT on course content and ILOs.</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<p>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.</p> <p>Assessment is c/w, remote, as distance learning, no exams. Mostly individual, with a formative group c/w. The feedback is excellent, detailed and thorough, and a real learning opportunity for the students. Even the MCQ online test is intelligent, and provides knowledgeable feedback based upon students answers.</p>		

The lectures and course material provided, though online, are from leaders in their respective fields, a high quality learning opportunity.		
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>Most of the students were good performers, with some excellent. One was a fail, and rightly so due to poor quality. Engagement seems very good – commendable for a distance learning course. Their performance compared to FT students on similar MSc courses in the same school seems to be better/superior, despite being distance learners. Their strength as a cohort is their (usual) active industry involvement. Conversely, their weakness is their academic rigour, e.g. when referencing and/or writing – this could be improved.</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>		

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?	N/A
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?	N/A
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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i> No exams, so didn't comment on those. c/w only.</p>		

Other comments

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

A newish course, first graduates this time. To be commended.

Students are well looked after throughout their journey, which is important for PT distance learners in a variety of countries. Good direction and admin support.

Feedback is generally very good.

Marking is rigorous, double marking commonly. Mostly individual c/w, appropriate.

There are few fails compared to comparable courses, but the quality was there, and the students seem committed and motivated. Some students obviously struggled with academic writing and referencing. More advice and support and feedback on this, at different points throughout the course, would be beneficial, perhaps examples of good practice, and making clear the consequences of poor or inadequate referencing (and/or plagiarism)

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

MSc (Eng) Advanced Concrete Technology

Programme(s) / Module(s):

CIVE5451M Constituent Materials of Concrete
CIVE5452M Cement and Concrete Properties
CIVE5453M Repair of Concrete Structures
CIVE5454M Concrete Production
CIVE5455M Individual Research

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

MSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

School of Civil Engineering

Address for communication:

The University
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 thank the examiner for their comments. We are continually striving to improve the quality of our offering and will attempt to build on these positive comments.

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:

No response is required for this year.

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 very grateful for such positive 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:

We recognise the need to improve student awareness of academic integrity. There were cases this year of students copying verbatim from a textbook and this was dealt with via the usual approach of a meeting with the School's Academic Integrity Officer. There are, however, some other examples of poor practice rather than lack of academic integrity. We will look at increasing online provision of material to improve student practice. We will also look at including online MCQs on plagiarism prior to coursework submission. Academic rigour will be given emphasis consistently throughout all assignment submissions with marks allocated specifically for quality of technical writing and referencing.

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:

No comments necessary.

Other comments

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

We are happy with the overall positive view of the course. We will work on improving the provision of education in academic integrity and draw up resources on academic writing.

The programme is still evolving so we will strive to make sure that any future changes do not impact on what we do already.

Double marking will be consistently applied to all modules.

Module/sample assignments will be made available for student consultation to give guidance to those who may suffer from identifying the expected quality.