

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 12/08/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Mechanical Engineering

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MDes,BSc Product Design
MDes,BSc Product Design (Industrial) Year 3 Placement
MDes,BSc Product Design (International)
MDes, BDes Product Design
BSc Product Design
BDes Product Design
BSc Product Design (Industrial)
MDes, BDes Product Design (Industrial) Year 3 Placement
MDes, BDes Product Design (Industrial) Year 4 Placement
MDes, BDes Product Design (International) (No longer recruiting from 201516)

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

BSc and MDes

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.

See below

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

See below

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?	N/A
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?	N/A

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	N/A
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	N/A

6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

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

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

See below

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear? There is an innovative module on Design Research((5185) and there is the new module on additive Manufacturing(3775)	Y
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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 addition I re-include my comments from last year

There are a number of design research activities and conferences that the team would find interesting and of support and perspective: ICED, Design2018, E&PDE'17.

The Design Society has a SIG on design education.

They would get a good view on their course and pick up some new ideas to help keep their very good course fresh

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

Assessment and Feedback

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

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award? This is very well balanced and put together. I particularly like the inclusion of formal examinations. This is quite unusual with other “product/industrial” design type courses. It is very commendable and very valuable.	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y
<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>		
<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
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? See comments below	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? Excellent	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? This was very well set up and very well managed.	Y
<i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i> I received a very detailed response to my comments on the 20-90/2-9 module grading system from Head of QA. This was very much appreciated and I am pleased that the scale is going.		

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

General

There probably has been a little slippage this year in terms of the information presented for this examiner. This is probably a consequence of some of the key members of staff being in Mexico pursuing research contacts and developments in Mexico. This is commendable in its own right and will undoubtedly benefit the course in the future. Having said that it was clear that the work had been professionally dealt with. I re-include my comments for the previous year.

2016-17 Comment

As I commented last year it is clear that there are a lot of good processes and an extensive range of assessments for the various modules. This is quite a complex "eco-system". We were provided this year with a summary sheet of the four years and the associated modules and their credit value. This was simple, yet invaluable as we could work through and tick off the samples of work and assessments that had been very usefully provided. For next year I would like this developed to include the assessment elements for each module; namely exam, course work 1, 2, 3...n and their associated weightings. If this could be provided before the examination day, I can indicate which modules and their associated instructions, assignments and mark sheets that I would like to see.

Examinations

The examinations, as I have commented before, are excellent. The new additive manufacturing paper (3775) is a great addition to the portfolio and was very well put together. The advanced electronics paper (2525) is very good and as I commented very challenging, but the students rose to the challenge. I note from the A3 review sheet (commented on below) that the exam is to be increased in value, considering its challenge this seems to me very reasonable, I commented at a technical level on one question on Mechanical Systems (3170), only by looking at the exam paper given to the students did I notice that the changes that I had suggested had been incorporated. I took a copy home and made the comparison. This was in fact very gratifying. There is a section on the exam processing paper work where responses to comments should be included. It is important that this is completed as it ensures the integrity of the system. An examiner (at the institution) may have a different view or different approach on a particular topic and as an external that is perfectly reasonable academic practice, as long as the changes or non-changes are listed or referenced.

Coursework

I examined the coursework from 10 modules. It was in fact clear that they had been dealt with in a professional manner, based on a combination of the evidence provided and the confidence gained from last year. For example 2150 provided examples of handbooks going from 90.7, 59 and to 38.3 % and 2510 provided 6 examples of innovation posters from 78 to 50%. 3200 had a range from 75 to 42%. The point of asking for samples is to assess whether the 75% deserves more than the 42%. In this case it clearly did there was a marking scheme with criteria and good annotation and clear assessment and feedback. The students and any external assessment body could have no complaints. Thus it is important to have the full trail as mentioned above.

A3 Review Sheet

This was an innovation from previous years and was of considerable the value to all the examiners. I was able to highlight the modules that I was involved with and see all the basic data in one very clear format. In addition there were the comments from the review meeting. This is where the information on the change to the exam weighting for 2525 came from (mentioned above). I also noted that 2200 Design Studio 2 was to be considerably modified. I will now be able to look out for this next year. It is very professional and exemplary to see this level of self-analysis and appraisal. If it was at all possible it would be very valuable to see this document before the examiners meeting?

(Slightly related, I also very much liked the traffic light system for mitigating circumstances. It was clear, transparent and efficient.)

Students

I talked to 3 students. They were all very positive about the course and liked the fact that it included both the technical and the artistic and quite liked that “tension” one less so than the other two. They all commented on the industry facing activity that they had undertaken, for example with

They were generally very happy with the feedback and getting it through the VLE was fine. They thought that the electronics was very well taught and the and the staff were very approachable. They appreciated how essential this was, even though they had decided it was not their metier.

Two of the three had got placements, but even with the information from the placement centre, they had to do the considerable amount of work themselves, one commented that she had probably done 100 applications and associated elements. The third had just given up and in fact it was clear that needed a placement to understand the world of design and was having a year as a Teaching Assistant in old school. It may be useful to see what other support could be given, possibly arranging some key companies who regularly take Leeds students to come in and do their interviews of several students? I think that we all appreciate how educationally beneficial and character forming the placement activity is.

In conclusion this is a very good course that is well put together, well run and well examined and assessed.

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

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Product Design

Programme(s) / Module(s):

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

BSc and MDes

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Mechanical Engineering

Address for communication:

School of Mechanical Engineering, 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 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

We would like to thank the External Examiner for positive comments in relation to the 3775/2425 modules, our traffic light system for mitigating circumstances and our electronic course and for general view that our PDes course is very good overall.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**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:

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:

We apologise for the slippage in the information presented and agree that this was probably exacerbated by the unfortunate timing of our staff research visit to Mexico. As requested, we will ensure that we provide the required information including a summary sheet with the assessed elements of each module before the examination day

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 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 will consider additional methods for encouraging more PDES students to participate on work placements, We will work with our Faculty Employability Team to explore any company contact and opportunities.