

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18 QAT Received 22/10/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Electrical & Electronic Engineering
<i>Subject(s):</i>	
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	MSc Electrical Eng & Renewable Energy Systems, MSc Electronic & Electrical Engineering, MSc Mechatronics and Robotics
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	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.

In general the processes and conduct of the exam procedures on the whole was very good indeed. Care was taken to see students were treated fairly and procedures seemed very sensible on the whole.

The traceability of moderation and exam scrutiny process is exemplary, as is the checking process for exam marking. It is also very good to see how seriously academic integrity is taken. I am pleased to see still non-anonymised exam grids – this in my opinion offers better student care. The colour coding of exam grids was also very helpful in interpretation.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

Not – applicable – this is my first year.

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

Not applicable.

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?	N (not applicable)

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

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

Not applicable

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 (but see below)
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y (but see below)
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y (but see below)
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.

The ILOs for modules could do with a general review against current best practice both in terms of language and number.

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

The projects I saw at the top end certainly seemed very impressive and I would not have objected to a slightly more generous assessment, certainly at the top end. It is clear that these projects are 'research led'. I would encourage academics to use the full range of marks available to them.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	No comment
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Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

I have not been made aware of these being part of an integrated 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)?	Y
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Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

Standards are high as appropriate for an IET accredited School.

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>Though see above – comments on 12.</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>It is important to continually check consistency of assessment of projects for MSc programmes. For Mechatronics & Robotics, the outcomes seem weaker, though for admittedly a small sample and for a higher credit bearing project (so there will be some variation and so data cannot be interpreted definitively on the basis of one year only). The need to ensure consistency was raised by an external examiner last year too. I would emphasize that for a large credit bearing activity like a project it is also important to review the activity to make sure weaker students can still benefit from the learning and have projects suitable to their skills and which they can demonstrate achievement in.</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?	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

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

I note there was an issue on availability of samples of some of the coursework components of some modules (e.g. ELEC5031, ELEC5451) – it would have be useful to get a view to what extent the School / University needs to have sample of coursework reviewed by external examiners. This may be significant in light of the need to review some of the work - e.g. ELEC5451 –to design out opportunity for collusion in lab work.

Other comments

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

I notice that one poor exam and resit fail can blight an otherwise excellent student performance and the University could do with looking at this to check whether it is still content with this arrangement.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):	Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Electrical Engineering & Renewable Energy Systems MSc Electronic & Electrical Engineering MSc Mechatronics & Robotics
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

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 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 are pleased that the External Examiner has commended the School's approach to examination processes and we note that the External Examiner fully endorses our approach to the Board of Examiners meeting, including the avoidance of anonymised reports of student achievement. This is currently University of Leeds policy, although in common with many HE institutions, the policy is under review. The School will ensure that the Quality Assurance Team are aware of this point of feedback.

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:

We are pleased that there were no matters requiring 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:

There were no matters arising within this section that require further comment from the School.

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 External Examiner has endorsed the coherence of the programme structure. The School is currently engaged in a review of the wording of the learning outcomes for modules, primarily with the aim of making them better aligned to UK-SPEC/AHEP learning outcomes. We hope that this will provide an opportunity to make the module-level learning outcomes more coherent across the programmes and identify modules with excessive learning outcomes.

We agree that project assessments should make use of the full range of marks, and regularly remind staff of this. We are pleased to note that the quality of projects compare favourably with the External Examiner's expectations.

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 note the External Examiner's confirmation that the overall assessment and feedback processes are satisfactory and appropriate. We have since discussed the marking schemes for projects in Mechatronics and Robotics with the Module Leader. We agreed that the sample size is relatively small; nevertheless, we also agreed that there is a case for improved briefing for both students and project supervisors in terms of the expectations for masters level projects.

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:

We note the External Examiner's confirmation that the procedures in place for viewing examination papers, students' scripts and project reports, and for the conduct of the Progression and Awards Board, are all satisfactory. We have noted the specific point concerning availability of coursework samples, particularly for those modules without a final written examination such as ELEC5031M and ELEC5451M mentioned. ELEC5451M has been redesigned for 2018-19, and we hope that the changes will have addressed the unsatisfactory number of plagiarism cases we experienced in 2017-18.

Other comments

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

The point raised concerning the consequences for students with a single poor exam result (after both the initial and re-assessment opportunity) is certainly important. The School's enhanced Rules for Award (which are more stringent than the University's standard Rules for Award) are a result of compliance with the requirements for accreditation (derived from the Engineering Council's rules on condonement/compensation). Students are made aware of the enhanced rules before they commence their studies. The Engineering Council has recently issued further directives to all PSRB bodies (licensed to accredit engineering degree programmes) which has prompted a wider discussion across the Schools within the Faculty of Engineering. We are considering options which might enable us to be fully compliant with this directive, whilst avoiding the unsatisfactory situation of a student being unable to receive an MSc degree due to a single module failure. This will require a change to the School's enhanced Rules for Award, which we are currently considering.