

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 01/07/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Faculty of Engineering, School of Chemical and Process Engineering

Subject(s):

Chemical Engineering, Chemical and Energy Engineering, Chemical and Materials Engineering, Chemical and Nuclear 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

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 process that should be carried out for marking and checking of exam scripts is to a very high standard.

A lot of variation (through varied degree programme module choices) enable a lot of student choice which is valued by the students. Shared modules between programmes enable students with various experiences to interact promoting a collaborative atmosphere. Within the required group work elements of the degree suitable opportunity is given to show independent (individual) learning, but then also promotes the integration of this into final group submission.

The ability to offer individual MEng research project and the range of project that are offered is excellent. The management and marking of these projects has been carried out using a new (to the school) bit of software, this was very helpful in checking the whole process from project allocation through to final mark.

Within the programme a range of assessment methods are used which are fit for purpose. Material suited to PC based assessment is in general assessed via this route, material that is suitable for unseen written examination assessed in that way and coursework assignment for the more project related areas. Summative and formative work is aligned to try and allow students to understand their progress through their degree through each year.

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 use of new (to the school) software for the management and marking of the research projects appears to have been well used, and made the process of checking the research projects much more straight forward than in previous years. There is potential for it to be used in the design project as well.

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

Although the process around marking and checking of exam scripts is suitable, this year it hasn't been carried out by all modules. In particular CAPE3301 Paper 1 still had a number of unresolved problems (even though some had

been highlighted by the checker). It is unfortunate, but it suggests that some form of additional loop closure around the marking and checking process is required.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment only

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 only

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)?	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.

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
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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?	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)?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i> 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</p>		

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> I still feel in places the course is 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.</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> 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> 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 gain 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?	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
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>The SC have been changed, interestingly as an institution we have just moved away from the position now taken. The process in how modules with mitigation were considered for degree awards was appropriate and equivalent to the process we use. However we would now offer the opportunity for students to retake modules (with suitable mitigation) that have been passed (not only if failed) as being in the best interest of the student (students rarely take the opportunity, although some do from a transcript pride perspective).</p>		

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. 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.

Although there was an option for students to meet with me, none were available on the day.

Some further general comments:

- (i) Some modules/programmes still have very small numbers on them. It is difficult to balance the positive aspects of having a range of things to appeal to students and the administrative burden of maintaining and delivery.
- (ii) The clarity around exam marking and checking this year was generally very good, however as noted above in particular CAPE3301 Paper 1 fell well short of these standards (the initial checking though was excellent!).
- (iii) From a checking perspective for the projects and other multi component modules, I had access to the marks breakdown which was very useful, so thank you.

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

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MEng and BEng versions of the above programmes

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

BEng/MEng and Alternative Qualifications

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Chemical and Process Engineering, Faculty of Engineering of Engineering and Physical Sciences

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) must be sent 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 thanks _____ for comments. Significant effort has been expended in terms of changing the processes associated with the marking and checking of exam scripts (see below for follow up comments). In terms of assessment across the programmes, this is an area that has been addressed at School teaching away days to ensure that the types of assessments are appropriate to assess the intended learning outcomes. For this reason there is a range of assessment methods. The School will continue to review assessment methods to ensure they continue to remain relevant. Also the new approach to the marking of Research Projects has involved significant effort from the Module Leader and it is a pleasure to read that is seen to be a step change in terms of approach. Finally the feedback on range and variety of projects and modules is pleasing to read and this is an area the School will continue to work on in particular with reference to research projects.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The School thanks _____ for highlighting the revised approach to the marking of research projects and the use of new software. We note _____ recommendation that the approach could be rolled out to the design projects. We will consider converting our current approach to design project marking to one more aligned with that of the research project.

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 addressing the issues around ensuring that all modules are marked and checked to the same standards of exam. The School now has a dedicated Examinations Officer. This will facilitate the validation of the exam marking and checking processes across all modules. This final check had not been in place previously. It had been left to Module Leaders to fulfil this activity.

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 thanks _____ for positive responses to questions 8 to 16, in particular the fact that the programmes offered are closely alignment with the IChemE accreditation guidelines and that the School is drawing on its research strengths with respect to the design and 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 thanks _____ for comments and notes the feedback in particular with respect to the fact that some areas of the course is over assessed. The School has undertaken a review of assessment across all modules and years and initial changes in terms of reducing the amount of assessment have been implemented. However it is acknowledged that there is still additional work to be undertaken to reduce the quantity of assessment and this is an area that the Assessment Lead (new position) is driving forward with Module Leaders. The School will ensure that through its revision to the assessments, it ensures an appropriate balance of coursework and examinations is retained and that the intended learning outcomes are not impacted.

The School will follow up your recommendation with respect to External Examiners having access to the VLE. The School concurs with your request for access as it would provide yourself with a clearer overview of how the School works with respect to the VLE and hence assessments more generally.

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 thanks _____ for positive response to all questions within Sections 20 to 35 pertaining to The Progression and Awards Process. It is noted that the approach adopted by the University of Leeds in terms of Special Circumstances is how _____ had previously managed Special Circumstances and mitigation but that they have recently moved away from the revised Leeds approach as they felt it was not necessarily in the best interests of the students.

Other comments

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

(i) _____ raises concerns around the small number of students on some modules and acknowledges that there is the need for a balance between administrative load providing the students with a wide choice of modules. It is an area that the University of Leeds his requiring all Schools to look at and address in particular if modules have <10 students on a regular basis. The School is reviewing modules that fall into this category and following consultation with the module managers and students and will make necessary changes to the range of modules offered.

(ii) The School is pleased to note the positive feedback in general with respect to exam marking and checking. It acknowledges that although the initial checks of the CAPE3301 Paper 1 were excellent, the follow up by the members of staff associated with the module were below standard. As stated above we now have an Examinations Officer in place who will be responsible for validating that any issues raised by checkers are dealt with properly.

(iii) The School thanks _____ for positive feedback with respect to the receipt of the marks breakdown for projects and other multi-component modules. The School thank _____ for recommendation from the previous year.