

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 12/03/2020

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

School of Mechanical Engineering

Subject(s):

Mechanical Engineering

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering, BEng Mechanical Engineering Xinan Jiaotong-Leeds Joint School, BEng Mechanical Engineering (Industrial), MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering (Industrial) Year 3 and Year 4 Placement, MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering (International).

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

BEng/MEng

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

As with last year, I particularly like the group projects and individual projects. The feedback mechanisms used are some way above what I have seen elsewhere in some modules.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Small tweaks have been made to address small issues. There were no big problems that needed urgent attention.

Matters for Urgent Attention

Nothing needs urgent attention.

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 an 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?	NA
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	NA
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	NA
7.	Have you acted as an External Examiner Mentor?	NA

NA

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>As with last year, I had a great impression of the programmes and modules. The structure is good and standards are still above those I have seen in other similar Departments and processes appear more efficient.</p> <p>As before, I like the structure for Level 3 and 4, although, as mentioned last year, it generates a high workload for staff, particularly via the projects. As mentioned last year, it would be good to see more industry involvement in the projects, particularly the Level 4 group project.</p> <p>There were high marks for the individual projects this year. I think it would be good to look at the challenge versus achievement for projects – this will help deal with the naturally diverse nature of projects in a mechanical engineering department. Also conduct marks need reviewing.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p>There is a strong element of research led teaching in the Level Four modules. Most coursework had reports though as main output – is there anything you can do to vary this and reduce assessment workload? Some more creative lab based exercises could be included perhaps?</p> <p>There is a very strong influence from Tribology. Perhaps this could be made more focussed in future years?</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
NA		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
NA		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y
The programmes are clearly fine for IMechE accreditation.		

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>The assessment methods on the whole are appropriate. There could still be some innovation introduced for coursework elements (there are still a lot of reports). Doing something different could reduce assessment for the students and reduce marking loads for the module leaders with diminishing the impact of the module.</p> <p>Student feedback on the quality of teaching was very positive again. The students I spoke to were incredibly enthusiastic and mostly very happy with their degree programmes. The comments from last year on some</p>		

inconsistencies on feedback approaches and variability in some cases in resource provision between modules did not come up again, so whatever has happened to address this obviously worked. There were issues raised about having a greater number of large lecture theatres to reduce the amount of walking in short time slots between lectures (also a problem flagged up by students at – I think they should just get on with the walking...). Some also mentioned that the choices for the modules in later years were not necessarily what they were expecting from a mechanical engineering department. I did point out that as these were largely research led, that some areas would not always be represented. They expressed a desire for more interdisciplinary work as well. Things they mentioned they liked: mix of labs and coursework to support learning in lectures; amount of assessment; accessibility of module leaders; computer access; diversity in lecturers; feedback.

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

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:

Module leader reflections remain very useful. This is helpful in understanding why marks may have been low in a one off module or low across a whole year group.

Year 1 marks were very similar to last year in that they were high.

Year 2 marks were quite variable. Module leaders had included plans to make assessments more challenging where needed.

Year 3 marks were up from last year, but last year's cohort were noted to be weaker than normal.

Year 4 marks were relatively low, but they had relatively low marks in Year three last year as well.

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
Again a very smooth and efficient process. It is very easy to follow the rationale for decisions.		

Other comments

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

NA

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Mechanical Engineering

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering, BEng Mechanical Engineering Xinan Jiaotong-Leeds Joint School, BEng Mechanical Engineering (Industrial), MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering (Industrial) Year 3 and Year 4 Placement, MEng, BEng Mechanical Engineering (International).

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

BEng/MEng

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Mechanical Engineering

Address for communication:

University of Leeds, Leeds, LS29JT

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 were pleased the examiner highlighted some of our feedback mechanisms as being way above what has seen elsewhere.

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:

None identified

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:

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 will continue to ensure that level 4 projects have as much industry involvement as possible and will use our extensive industrial contacts to do this.

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 have introduced a number of innovations in the last two years specifically designed to reduce the assessment burden on staff and students, specifically in projects, where we have now introduced tailored support for computational mechanics-type activities. We will continue to look for opportunities to reduce the assessment burden without compromising the student learning experience.

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 thank the external examiner for positive comments.

Other comments

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