

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 14/08/2019

**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 only**

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 only**

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

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  
**See my final set of comments below**

## 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?	N
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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)

**These are my comments from the last TWO years. I think that there would be a lot of benefit from engagement by members of the team. The community would also be interested in receiving input from the team, especially the electronics(world class) and Additive Manufacturing modules. I have received no indication of engagement.**

*“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: **N/A**

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: **N/A**

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:

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### 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><b>Very good and well balanced – see report below for making the understanding of the breakdown of the individual modules clearer</b></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><b>I have interviewed students in each of my four years as examiner. I have found them to be of a very good standard, engaging and engaged. The assessment process seems to work well, as on a very limited sample and superficial appraisal, it has picked up what would seem to be the weaker students when they have come.</b></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> <p><b>See below</b></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? <b>See below</b>	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? <b>I have made comments on how this can be streamlined and made more efficient</b>	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? <b>See below</b>	
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? <b>EXEMPLARY</b>	Y
Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above: <b>See below</b>		

### Other comments

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

#### Introduction

This is my last examiners report, so forgive me a little homily. The course that I have examined for 4 years is very good indeed. It is well put together, it engages the students, it has some great examinations (very unusual for product design courses, but very worthwhile), good coursework and projects and adds real value to the students that take the course.

In terms of the operation of the course there are real stars in the process and there are some clear weaknesses. These weaknesses are not in terms of content and approach, but in terms of procedures. As I have commented on before, none of us like to do the paper work and fill in the forms, but if we, the University Sector, is to maintain its independence and not have our activities undertaken by some OFSTED like organisation it is important to undertake these activities. Setting and marking and monitoring our own curricula, examinations and course work is a privilege that we have been specially granted and need to cherish it. It has to be said that over the years as examiner at a number of institutions I have had to make and reinforce this point.

Of interest is that when I have had to explain what I am doing as “external examiner” to friends, colleagues from industry and research institutions and family. They are genuinely surprised, if not a little shocked, at the process and its associated autonomy.  
The report follows below.

#### Examinations

The four examinations that I review, PDES3170, PDES2510, PDES2525 and Mech3775 are all very good examples of University style examinations indeed. I received very good responses to my comments on PDES2525 and Mech3775, including a debate on the nature of dental crowns and a rebuttal, in a professional manner, of some of my suggestions/comments. This is very good process and exactly as you would expect.

I received no comments from PDES3170 and PDES2510. This was very disappointing as they were both good examinations, I had been fulsome in my praise. Also as last year I pointed out in this report that I had had to do a manual check to see if an error on 3170 had been implemented (It had).

Of more concern was that the exam scripts for PDES2510 were not available in the review room! They were eventually found by the DOS in the lecturer’s office 10 minutes before the examiners meeting at

13.50. I was only able to give them a perfunctory look. I also had no examples of course work. I note that in the A3 review sheet that this module had a very high average at 70.34 up by 5% from last year. In the absence of any examples I was unable to make any contribution to this situation. This is very poor and unprofessional (See comments above). I hope that the HOS and the course leader takes steps to ensure that it does not happen again.

Also the physical process of marking was not at all consistent. Some marks were in the margins and some marks were in the middle of the scripts along with ticks. This is a recipe for inconsistency and may well come back to bite as students get access to marked examinations. I noticed that the checker had picked up a number of examples of where the individual mark elements had been incorrectly added up

### **Cousework**

I examined specifically coursework elements from Mech3775, PDES3110, PDES2525 and PDES3110 (Design Project). It has to be said that I had been provided with a good range of examples as I had requested previously, with for example from PDES2525 a discrete number of samples from one element going from 21% to 75%. It was very easy to see the rational for this difference.

My key comment here would be that even with my experience that I had to spend time checking previous years information. This was to ascertain what element a particular piece of course work contributed.

It would be very useful for each module to have a summary list of the percentage breakdown between examination and various course work elements. Then for each of the coursework elements we could have the brief, the associated mark distribution. Then we could have a representative sample of top, bottom middle and associated with each of these the completed marksheet and feedback. I appreciate that a lot of this is on the VLE now but it is not unreasonable for the 3/5, say, examples to be printed off for the examiners.

It is interesting to note that one of my fellow examiners made exactly the same request for the degree that he was dealing with(Automotive, I think)

### **Students**

I talked to 4 very good students, all from year 3, one was doing a placement before the masters, one was going on to the masters, one was not sure and would probably go and get some experience and one was going to get a job –“probably in manufacturing”. - So a very good and interesting mix. Their comments were interesting, well balanced and well thought through. They are summarised below.

They thought that the risk/credit/effort equation was not completely equitable. For example a 2500 word essay was interesting and valuable, but only gained 10 credits, whereas other less onerous activities were worth 30 credits. It is probably one for the team to keep under review.

They commented (see previous years comments) on the Facilities Lab. They thought it was too controlled, too limited and too focussed on 3D printing. One of the students pointed out that one of his friends had a 3D printer in her bedroom! Also another student did actually say “what is a lathe” when I was trying to find out what was available.

They loved (their term) the Innovation week activity and the electronics course work and the 3D printer competition (I sense that these activities are run by inspired staff and I hope that they are appropriately

rewarded and appreciated). (It did strike me that if you can create a 3D printer that you can operate one on your own? See comments about the Facilities Lab)

Their final key comment was on the fact that in the group work that students all got the same mark and they commented that in a lot of their group activity that this was fully justified. But it was clear that in some of the group activities the contribution to the group activity was poor and not deserving of the full mark. I did notice while undertaking my review of course work there were a few students that I picked up who had got low 2.2 marks when working in pairs, but 1<sup>st</sup> marks when in a group.

This is an ongoing issue with all group work at all institutions. The Department might like to look at the Loughborough WEBPA(open source) which helps to enable peer moderation in a private and non-confrontational manner

WEBPA -<http://webpaproject.lboro.ac.uk/>

### **Conclusions**

This has been a most interesting and enjoyable 4 years. The course is in a very good state and the internal monitoring of the various modules via the A3 sheet(see last year's comments) is exemplary. The administration by the Director of Studies has been very good and attentive but he needs more support from his colleagues, particularly on the external examination day, which is only one day in the year. I would also like to thank [redacted] for dealing with both my administrative and operational requirements. It has been marvellous.

My detailed comments are listed above. However, PDES is a complex and highly interrelated and arguably unique activity and needs management and attention to keep its key elements functioning together. It also means that it is a difficult task for an examiner to undertake his or her duties with confidence and to a high standard. I looked at my comments and requirements from my first examiners report for 2015/16 making this point and pointing out how this can be achieved. I have a feeling that this has slipped latterly. It thus may be useful to have someone tasked with pulling together the elements of this "eco-system" for assessment and appraisal purposes (as well as for internal course monitoring purposes). Similarly I have no sense how comments from students or colleagues or collaborators might be dealt with and used?

To quote Thomas Jefferson "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance" This is why the quality of the examination process is so critical and only can be undertaken with the correct preparation.

All the very best to the course and the Department in the future.

8.08.2019(V1) 26.02.2020(V2)

**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):	Product Design
Programme(s)	BSc, MDes Product Design.
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc, MDes

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	Mechanical Engineering
Address for communication:	Woodhouse Lane, 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) must be sent directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at [gat@leeds.ac.uk](mailto: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**

It is fantastic to read \_\_\_\_\_ response with such kind comment such as, “The course that I have examined for 4 years is very good indeed. It is well put together, it engages the students, it has some great examinations (very unusual for product design courses, but very worthwhile), good coursework and projects and adds real value to the students that take the course”. We are very proud of our “world class” *electronics and of our* “very good examples of University style examinations indeed”. Thankyou \_\_\_\_\_ for you input over the last 4 years.

**Response to Enhancements made from the previous year**

Provided by External Examiner in main text

**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

**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:*

It is reassuring to note that \_\_\_\_\_ agrees that we reach the national benchmark standards. On point 13 where \_\_\_\_\_ suggests involvement in ICED and E&PDE, it is worth noting that several PDES staff have presented at E&PDE 2011, 2013 and 2015. We have discussed this and it is our intention that staff will be provided with support to attend further scholarship opportunities in the field of Design and Design Education.

## 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:*

none

## 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:*

I will pass on your welcome comments to our Student Support team about how communication of decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated in an "EXEMPLARY" way to the Progression and Awards Board?

## Other comments

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

We have discussed the comments as a team and have the following actions:

#### Examinations

- Greater communication between staff and External examiner around examinations.
- Update staff on consistency of the process of marking scripts.

#### General Admin of EE visit

- Ensure ALL scripts and course work are made available for the External Examiner in a timely manner.
- Make available a summary of the percentage breakdown between examination and various course work elements.
- Ensure briefs for each of the coursework elements are made available
- Ensure representative samples of top, bottom middle available for each coursework.
- Print examples where appropriate based on size/volume/cost.

#### Scholarship in field of Design

- Allow time during visit for External Examiner to meet with staff to share insights and discuss scholarship and other such development activities and opportunities.

#### Student Experience

- Continue to improve student access to Workshop/Lab - Students thought it was too controlled, too limited and too focussed on 3D printing.

#### Group work

- Analysis of impact of group/individual marks on individuals' classification.
- Consider how peer reviews could be implemented.



Conclusions

- Update external examiner on how EE comments were implemented at next EE visit.