

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT received 20/11/19

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Mathematics

Subject(s):

Statistics

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MSc Statistics
MSc Statistics with Applications to Finance
MSc Medical Statistics
MSc Data Science and Analytics

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

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.
Staff are generally efficient and helpful. The procedures for providing exam papers and solutions works well.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
After three years, I had no further suggestions.

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?	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

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
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?	Y
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

The school has been helpful, and has responded constructively to suggestions for change. The changes can be seen from my previous three years reports. The issues included timing of meetings, checking of marking and use of real world data.

The School might consider highlighting to external examiners any dissertations for which there were Substantial changes in marks before and after the viva. (This is a limited check on overall consistency of marking.) A review of the approach to assessing consistency of standards would be sensible.
Double entry and independent checking of marks on module summary sheets would be advisable.

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><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The overall programmes are sensible, and relate well to the integrated masters programmes.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>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)</i></p> <p>The modules allow staff to reflect the research interests of staff. Dissertations are informed by research interests</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p> <p>I am not aware of accreditation by Royal Statistical Society</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></p> <p>The range of assessment methods overall is sensible, allows different achievements to be recorded, and marking and classification is fair.</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>There is a wide range of abilities, as seen on mathematics courses elsewhere.</p> <p>In the M.Sc Statistics dissertations, there were 3 distinctions, 12 (55%) merit, 7 pass. The marks were fair, but the achievements perhaps disappointing for those recruiting to the M.Sc. Overall, in Statistics, Medical Statistics, Statistics with Finance, there were 5 distinctions, 8 merits, 11 pass and 5 fail. Again, this might be considered by those responsible for admissions.</p> <p>In the Data Science M.Sc, a third of dissertations were distinction and 40% merit, which is more satisfactory for the school. It is not surprising for 2 out of 47 students fail. Overall, nearly 40% distinctions, and 32% merits is a pleasing level of success.</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>No further comments</p>
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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?	N
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>		

Other comments

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

I appreciate there were some difficulties with staff health. Please remember to check that mark sheets are included in the files.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Statistics

Programme(s) / Module(s):

MSc Statistics
MSc Statistics with Applications to Finance
MSc Medical Statistics
MSc Data Science and Analytics

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

MSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Head of School

Faculty / School of:

Mathematics

Address for communication:

School of Mathematics, University of 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 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*

highlights the efficiency of our staff and procedures relating to assessment.

Response to *Enhancements made from the previous year*

No comments to respond to.

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:

No comments to respond to

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:

notes that during period appointment has made a number of suggestions that have led to improvements in our programmes. makes two further suggestions: (i) that projects with a large difference in marks before and after the viva be highlighted to external examiners; and (ii) that double entry and independent checking be used on module marksheets. Both suggestions will be discussed at the School Taught Student Education Committee on 8th January 2020. We note that the School already utilises independent checking of mark entry on module marksheets.

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:

is satisfied with our standards.

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:

is satisfied with our assessment and feedback. notes that some of our programmes seem to recruit a relatively large number of weak students. This comment has been passed on to the MSc admissions tutor and will be discussed at the meeting of the School Taught Student Education Committee on 8th January.

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:

is satisfied with our progression and awards processes.

Other comments

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

's comment about ensuring marksheets are included in files has been taken on board for next year.