

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

QAT received 25/10/19

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Physics

Subject(s):

Programme(s) / Module(s):

PHYS5018M, PHYS5019M, PHYS5021M

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

n/a

Enhancements made from the previous year

n/a

Matters for Urgent Attention

n/a

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 / N
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y / N
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
<p><i>Regarding the interdisciplinary programme PHYS5012M, I continue to be surprised that the 45-credit project module does not include a practical element. Many 20-40 credit modules offered elsewhere contain both.</i></p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
<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>		
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)?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<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>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y / N
<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>		

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

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?	N
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y / N
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y / N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y / N
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y / N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
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?	N
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N

I was not involved in exams.

As to the recommendations, I felt the span of grades was too small and did not sufficiently discriminate.

Other comments

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

1. I find the split between literature and project report into 5018 and 5019 artificial. This should be removed. While I agree that the literature review should be marked separately, partially as a way to track progress of students early on, the final report should be a comprehensive document; furthermore, as the work progresses, the student will gain understanding, be able to put their work into context better, and so will wish to update the lit review.
2. As already mentioned above, the range of grades awarded was too small and did not discriminate sufficiently between the quantity and quality of work presented. This happened at both ends of the spectrum:
 - presented a pitiful amount of work for PH5018, which deserved no more than 20-30%, yet both examiners marked her in the mid-50's.
 - presented an exceptional piece of work, but at 82, it was graded very similar to her colleague (79). I would have graded _____ and _____ lower.

This form is far too long and I have no idea what to say to many of the questions.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Physics

Programme(s) / Module(s):

PHYS5018M, PHYS5019M, PHYS5021M

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

MSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

MSc Convenor

Faculty / School of:

EPS/School of Physics and Astronomy

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 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

n/a – no entry from external examiner

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

n/a – no entry from external examiner

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:

n/a – no entry from external examiner

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 – no entry from external examiner

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:

Response to question 12 – we agree with the examiners assessment, however this is the last year this particular programme of study is being offered by the school.

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:

n/a – no entry from external examiner

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:

Response to question 35 – we are implementing changes in the grading guidance given to markers in some modules in order to expand the range of marks awarded, in particular expanding use of an online system that will improve numerical consistency in terms of a marks relation to the descriptors for each grade.

Other comments

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

Response 1 – We agree with the examiners assessment, and note that this division of modules was imposed externally as the result of an earlier internal review. We will take the examiners comments forward to subsequent review with a mind to re-integrating the modules.

Response 2 - We are implementing changes in the grading guidance given to markers (including more specific 'grid' based guidance on the level expected for each criteria graded), in concert with increased use of an online system to improve numerical consistency of marks as regards their relation to the specified criteria. The steps should ensure consistent grading across the full spectrum of marks in agreement with the stated standards for the project module.