# External Examiner’s Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of External Examiner</th>
<th>Jon Spruce</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home institution and/or other professional/institutional affiliation of external examiner</td>
<td>Liverpool John Moores University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of report</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic year</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme/Course/Module:</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Product Design</td>
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Please name all collaborative partners encompassed by this report:

For Quality Unit Use only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date received in Quality Unit</th>
<th>17 07 13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date circulated</td>
<td>24 10 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URGENT PQEP item numbers</td>
<td></td>
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<td>PQEP item numbers</td>
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PART ONE : SUMMARY RESPONSE ON STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

If any matters raised here apply solely or particularly to any collaborative provision and/or programme(s) encompassed by this report please ensure that this is clear and that you identify the partner organisations(s) and/or programme(s) involved. Otherwise it will be assumed that all matters raised apply equally to all partner(s) and/or programme(s).

‘In the view of the examiners, the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.’
Is the above statement correct? (Yes/No)

Yes
If you have stated ‘no’, or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.

‘In the view of the examiners, the standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which they are familiar.’
Is the above statement correct? (Yes/No)

Yes
If you have stated ‘no’, or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.
Final year student performance appears very low this year – this is comparable with some other institutions but it should be noted that this is at the lower end of student performance.

‘In the view of the examiners, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.’
Is the above statement correct? (Yes/No)

Yes
If you have stated ‘no’, or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.
Although acceptable, against national benchmarks and comparable institutions the assessment of work I have reviewed appears quite generous and would I feel benefit from a more explicit use of standard university/nationally recognised grade descriptors as part of the assessment and feedback process – clarifying the level of expectations for both staff and students.
PART TWO: QUALITY OF PROVISION

This section of the report will be used to give the Programme Team (including staff at any partner organisation) further feedback on the quality being achieved in the programme, the effectiveness of the assessment processes, the quality of the student learning experience and the quality of student achievement.

If any matters raised here apply solely or particularly to any collaborative provision and/or programme(s) encompassed by this report, please ensure that this is clear and that you identify the partner organisations(s) and/or programme(s) involved. Otherwise it will be assumed that all matters raised apply equally to all partner(s) and/or programme(s).

It would be useful if you could identify areas of good practice as well as issues for action.

A. Academic Quality

Please give your views on the quality being achieved in the curriculum and the quality of provision being delivered, particularly curriculum content and teaching and learning strategies. Please indicate any specific action that you believe could be taken to enhance quality. If you feel that quality is at risk in any respect, please comment on any specific action that could be taken to address this.

### PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERALL RATING OF ACADEMIC QUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Key: 1=Excellent 2=Highly satisfactory 3=Acceptable 4=Unsatisfactory 5=Very unsatisfactory</th>
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Please identify concisely below those major strengths and/or weaknesses (if any) in Academic Quality which in your view are sufficiently significant to warrant explicit attention, action and tracking by the appropriate part(s) of the University.

**Significant Strengths**

N/A

**Significant Weaknesses**

Depth of ‘rigour’ in final year students projects work this year

Please use the space below for further explanatory comments and/or any additional points you wish to raise.

The final year students’ work this year appears to be very limited in terms of its level of depth and rigour in developing design ideas through to the expected level of detail and resolve. Some elements of the design process appear to be missing from the students portfolio of work – such as physical test prototypes/models/rigs, also development work demonstrating a level of ‘working through’ materials and manufacturing issues as appropriate seem very limited too.

B. Assessment Processes

Please comment on the appropriateness of the assessments in assessing the learning outcomes of the units (including work-based learning where relevant), the reliability of internal marking procedures
and the effectiveness of the moderation processes.

**PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERALL RATING OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES**  
Key: 1=Excellent 2=Highly satisfactory 3=Acceptable 4=Unsatisfactory 5=Very unsatisfactory  
Rating 3

Please identify concisely below those major strengths and/or weaknesses (if any) in Assessment Processes which in your view are **sufficiently significant to warrant explicit attention, action and tracking by the appropriate part(s) of the University.**

**Significant Strengths**

N/A

**Significant Weaknesses**

N/A

Please use the space below for further explanatory comments and/or any additional points you wish to raise.

Feedback mechanisms are clear. However, as I have stated in previously I feel more consideration could be given to the use of university standard grade descriptors as part of the assessment/feedback documentation – this would help both staff and students in evaluating learning as part of the feedback process.

**C. Quality of Student Learning Experience**

On the evidence available to you, please give your views on the quality of the students’ learning experience, including provision of student support and guidance and teaching and learning resources, indicating whether you have had the opportunity to meet students.

**PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERALL RATING OF STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**  
Key: 1=Excellent 2=Highly satisfactory 3=Acceptable 4=Unsatisfactory 5=Very unsatisfactory  
Rating 3

Please identify concisely below those major strengths and/or weaknesses (if any) in the Student Learning Experience which in your view are **sufficiently significant to warrant explicit attention, action and tracking by the appropriate part(s) of the University.**

**Significant Strengths**

Availability of one-to-one staff input

**Significant Weaknesses**

Low numbers of students in some cohorts  
Programme closure – this can have significant impact upon the student experience

Please use the space below for further explanatory comments and/or any additional points you wish to raise.

**D. Student Achievement**

Please comment on the overall quality of performance being achieved by students.
Please provide an overall rating of student achievement

Key: 1=Excellent 2=Highly satisfactory 3=Acceptable 4=Unsatisfactory 5=Very unsatisfactory

Rating 3

Please identify concisely below those major strengths and/or weaknesses (if any) in student achievement which in your view are sufficiently significant to warrant explicit attention, action and tracking by the appropriate part(s) of the University.

Significant Strengths
N/A

Significant Weaknesses
N/A

Please use the space below for further explanatory comments and/or any additional points you wish to raise.

Overall student achievement is in my view quite low and is on the border-line of acceptability. This is most significant in terms of final year students’ performance. Given this year’s low number of final year students (3 actually completing the programme of study) and the phasing out of the programme itself it is perhaps not surprising that performance has dropped – but this should not be viewed as an acceptable consequence.

E. Do you have any additional comments about programme quality (other than any covered previously in this report), including good practice, which you particularly wish to note?

N/A

F. Are you satisfied that any previous comments made by you as External Examiner have been noted and responded to?

YES  NO  N/A

Comments:

I feel ongoing progress is being made in previously referred to areas of programme delivery – however this needs to be maintained and should not now be halted through the phasing out period of the programme.
Before you submit this report, please confirm that you have completed all sections, giving ratings where requested, and that you have, where appropriate, identified any specific collaborative partners and/or individual programmes to which the issues you raise particularly or solely apply.

Confirmed: YES

Please return by e-mail to eereports@bolton.ac.uk

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

The issues and good practice raised in this report should be incorporated within the relevant Programme Quality Enhancement Plan (PQEP) and a copy of the plan sent to the External Examiner (with a covering letter) and (unless the PQEP is on QualTrack) to eereports@bolton.ac.uk by the end of November.