

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Leeds University Business School
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	LUBS3055 Controversies in HRM and Employment Relations LUBS3001 Gender & Equality at Work LUBS3855 Strategic HRM LUBS2060 Contemporary Ind Relations LUBS2885 HRM Research Practice and Personal Tutorials LUBS2890 Organisation & Human Resource LUBS3002 Diversity Management LUBS3310 HRM Dissertation
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BA HRM

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Academic Quality and Standards**
Academic Quality and Standards Team
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

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

No

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

N/A

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

N/A

Standards

1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award

- *The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

The intended learning outcomes, structure and content of modules and standards applied when marking were appropriate for an undergraduate degree in management or human resource management.

2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Yes

3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *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.*

Assessment methods were generally well designed and appropriate for the subjects being taught. Students experienced a range of assessment methods as part of the degree programme. Systems and processes for marking were rigorous and appropriate, with clear evidence of second marking and moderation where appropriate. There were examples of outstanding work among students at the top end, and a good proportion of students achieved marks of 2:1 level or better, suggesting that teaching and learning methods were appropriate.

I thought the teaching on research philosophy and methods was particularly well done judging by the quality of student work that I saw. Second years were being taught and clearly understanding sophisticated ideas and concepts and this clearly contributed to high quality work in the dissertation module among final year students.

4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *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.*

Students were given adequate opportunities to demonstrate achievement in relation to programme aims and learning outcomes. The student performance was on a par with that in other Universities where I have experience as an examiner (<>, <>, <>). At the top end, performance was very good, although there was also a small tail of very weak students.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

N/A

6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

There were significant changes to the dissertation preparation module in the final year, which judging by student performance in the dissertation, were a success.

7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

Research led teaching was clearly embedded in the modules, particularly in the area of research methods.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

9. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.

- *Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

I had sufficient information to perform the external examiner role.

10. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Yes. I made a few minor comments, which were responded to positively.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

Yes, I received a good range of scripts, and an audit trail of who performed the marking and why marks were awarded was clearly intelligible.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Yes, although 6000 words is rather a tight word limit for a dissertation, and I did feel that this made it difficult to do full justice to issues of methods and philosophy and to develop critical evaluation in literature reviews and discussion. An 8000 word limit might be more appropriate for the learning outcomes.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

Administrative support was very good this year, much better organised than last year. The Board of Examiners operated effectively and I was satisfied with the recommendations (I was able to attend the board).

15. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?

Last year I wrote that:

"This is one area where I felt improvements in processes and procedures would be helpful. Mitigating circumstances were considered by subject boards. Although I saw no evidence that subject boards were adopting different standards and approaches when considering mitigating circumstances, under present arrangements, it would be possible for different subject boards to take different approaches with the result that there could be inconsistencies and unfairness in the way that students with mitigating circumstances are treated. I would strongly recommend that subject boards should defer recommendations on students who have mitigating circumstances to the full school exam board so that these decisions can be taken in a consistent manner."

I received a response informing me that subject boards followed the recommendations on mitigating circumstances that came out of the school wide pre-board meeting. This struck me as a satisfactory response, although I was surprised because the description of practice in this area seemed at variance with what I thought I had observed at the board. I was even more surprised this year when it became apparent that the practice outlined in the letter of response was not being followed and that mitigating circumstances were being considered by the subject boards as before. While as last year, I was concerned about a hypothetical possibility of different standards being applied in different subject boards, this year, it was apparent that different subject boards are in fact adopting different standards in dealing with evidence of mitigating circumstances. Specifically, a student on the joint honours Economics and Management programme had mitigating circumstances. The Economics and Management subject boards took different decisions about how to treat these mitigating circumstances, and the difference had to be resolved at the full board.

I therefore repeat the point I made last year. It would be desirable to develop a better mechanism for ensuring consistency of treatment for students with mitigating circumstances. This could be in the form of recommendations from the pre-board

or in the form of subject boards deferring decisions to the full exam board.

Other comments

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

The introduction of a dinner for external examiners the night before the board was a very welcome addition, because it gave me the opportunity to discuss issues and observations about specific modules with members of the programme team in some detail.

One point which follows from these discussions was that on a couple of modules, there were marks distributions that were somewhat anomalous without being significantly out of line with standards across the sector as a whole. To suggest that these modules be re-marked to address the relatively minor anomaly would be a heavy handed response, but there could be more robust internal mechanisms for spotting and addressing such anomalies before they go to the external examiner. One practice in this area which I have seen at a number of other universities is to have an internal exam board that reviews marks distributions across modules in advance of input from the external examiner. Where this approach works, it helps to promote a culture of robust internal quality control. Although I appreciate that such a solution may be difficult given the time constraints you work under, it may be an idea worth exploring.

30 August 2013

◇

Reference: External Examination Report 2012-13

Dear ◇,

Thank you for your report as external examiner for the academic year 2012-13 in respect of the HRM programmes.

I am pleased that you were able to make largely positive comments about our HRM programme, its intended learning outcomes and methods of assessment. I am particularly pleased about the positive comments regarding the teaching of research methodology and how the module, and others, feeds into dissertations. This is a part of the programme where colleagues have worked hard to develop.

Your suggestions for further development specific to the HRM programme were discussed at our programme team meeting last week. Concerns regarding possible overlap between Organisation and the Human Resource and Strategic HRM were discussed in the presence of both module leaders. It was agreed that while the modules cover similar topics, the level 3 module builds on the level 2 module, and considers such topics from different academic positions. The level 2 module is also in the process of re-design and contraction from 20 to 10 credits. Both module leaders have arranged a regular dialogue to address future issues around coverage and continuity. Comments on the peer assessment element of Contemporary Industrial Relations were also discussed. The module leader has agreed to re-consider the mechanics of the method of peer assessment to ensure a greater range of marks. Finally, your comments regarding the assessment of dissertations were discussed. The module leader has agreed to consider alternative methods of assessment and moderation. While the process to be adopted next year has not yet been agreed, various options are being considered, such as using one first marker for all projects or allocating first marking duties to non-supervising colleagues.

As a Faculty, we will be reviewing the process of dealing with mitigating circumstances in the exam boards this year in response to your comments and will be specifically looking at how we can ensure consistency across the subject boards.

In response to feedback from previous years, we invited External Examiners to the Business School on the day prior to Exam Board in an attempt to allow examiners dedicated time to scrutinise assessed coursework and exam scripts. The feedback we have received in relation to this new approach has been very positive, although this may not have affected you personally due to your proximity to the Business School.

On behalf of the Work and Employment Relations Division may I again thank you for your suggestions and for your comments on our modules, our programmes, and our examining. We greatly appreciate the assistance you have given to us, and I look forward to seeing you once more at next year's examination board.

Yours sincerely

◇

Dean, Leeds University Business School

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012– 2013

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	LUBS / Business School					
Subject(s):	WERD					
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>LUBS2810</td> <td>Business & the Legal Environ.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LUBS3915</td> <td>Employment Law</td> </tr> </table>		LUBS2810	Business & the Legal Environ.	LUBS3915	Employment Law
LUBS2810	Business & the Legal Environ.					
LUBS3915	Employment Law					
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):						

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Academic Quality and Standards**
Academic Quality and Standards Team
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

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

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

.

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

These were provided through the University's website.

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award

- The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);
- The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.

- The assessment was clear and the difference between grades awarded were clearly founded upon the performance of each student, reflecting their individual strengths and weaknesses.

2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

- There were some excellent answers, demonstrating good working knowledge of the law. Analytical skills were also well demonstrated in response to written assignments and essay style exam questions. Where students were weaker, they did tend to demonstrate a basic grasp of the law but less ability to apply it succinctly.

3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *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.*

The various elements of the assessment were well designed, giving students a clear brief to follow. Feedback to students was detailed and supportive.

4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *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.*

Students were given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and application of a good range of material. They clearly understood the usefulness of case law in clarifying statutory provisions.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

The Examination/Assessment Process

9. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.

- *Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

I had access to a wide range of supportive material and was able to ask for additional information where necessary.

10. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

All the documentation was appropriate and as I new Examiner I found this particularly helpful.

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

I was so provided and found the nature and level of questions appropriate.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

I found this part of the process particularly well structured and commend the approach of a day dedicated to examining scripts at the University. Scripts were clearly marked and annotated and lecturers were on hand to answer questions and engage in dialogue.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

I have been well supported by the module leader and the admin team, particularly as a new examiner. I also found the validation day a very good way of organising the process.

15. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?

This was an issue raised at the examination board itself, reflecting concerns from an existing Examiner that the board was not necessarily the correct forum to consider these issues. I suggested that the University consider only bringing cases that could not be resolved outside the Board.

Other comments

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

I would like to thank the teaching and administration teams for their help and support. It is clear that the two groups of staff work well together which provides continuity of support to students and to External Examiners.

30 August 2013

<>

Reference: External Examination Report 2012-13

Dear <>,

Thank you for your report as external examiner for the academic year 2012-13 in respect of the WERD programmes.

I am pleased that you were able to make largely positive comments about our Employment Law and Business and the Legal Environment modules, their intended learning outcomes and methods of assessment. I am particularly pleased that you felt able to commend the clarity of annotation and feedback on student work you assessed.

With regard to your comment about the processes for considering mitigating circumstances at the main exam board, which was raised by other examiners, the issue has been raised at the faculty level and is under consideration at the relevant boards.

In response to feedback from previous years, we invited External Examiners to the Business School on the day prior to Exam Board in an attempt to allow examiners dedicated time to scrutinise assessed coursework and exam scripts. The feedback we have received in relation to this new approach has been very positive and we will look to repeat this format next year.

On behalf of the Division may I again thank you for your suggestions and for your comments on our modules, our programmes, and our examining. We greatly appreciate the assistance you have given to us, and I look forward to meeting you once more at next year's examination board.

Yours sincerely

<>

Dean, Leeds University Business School