

## 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):

MARK

Programme(s) / Module(s):

LUBS0030	Introduction to Marketing
LUBS1095	Personal Tutorials for Marketing
LUBS1860	Fundamentals of Marketing
LUBS2010	Consumer Behaviour
LUBS2160	Principles of Marketing
LUBS2850	Marketing
LUBS3190	International Marketing
LUBS3530	Advertising & Promotional Mgmt
LUBS3845	Marketing Strategy

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](mailto: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

None

**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?

I received the previous external examiner's report for 2011-2012 but I did not receive the School's response.

**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

**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 module aims and ILO were appropriate for both the year of assessment and the standard of the University. I can only comment on this at the module level as I was not given any information on the different programme aims and ILO to review them collectively.

**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.*

At the module level the aims and ILO were comparable with other similar institutions and against national benchmarks.

**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.*

Whilst there was a mix of assessment methods, it was weighted more towards examinations. There is possibly more scope for increasing the amount of coursework/presentations and reducing the reliance on examinations. Some modules did have a good balance and integration of the different assessment methods. There was only one module where there were issues with the exam paper – one question asked students to plan/create a campaign that would have contravened current regulations (this question was changed on my request) and other questions used very old case studies. I did not see the teaching material but this raises concerns that some of this material may also be out of date.

From my review of the student papers 4 issues were found:

1. On one module there were 2 very (I would estimate at least 85%) similar exam papers which raises the question of whether these students colluded in the examination or alternatively were aware of the possible questions before the exam and were able to prepare together. Neither is an acceptable situation.
2. On most, but not all, of the exam scripts there were virtually no, and in some cases no, comments/feedback as to why certain marks were given. There were a few scripts where there was no indication, apart from the grade on the front of the script, that questions had been marked. For students to improve they need appropriate feedback and as an assessor I need similar guidance on why marks have or have not been awarded, therefore, I strongly recommend that this is reviewed and improved.
3. In nearly all of the modules there was no evidence on the scripts/assignments that second marking/moderation had taken place. I feel that signing a sheet is insufficient evidence; there was no indication of how many or which scripts had been through this process.
4. To finish on a positive note, it was helpful to have the module statistics provided and also for one module I received some generic feedback (I assume written for the students) which was also extremely helpful giving the grades some context. I would recommend other module leaders follow this example.

**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.*

All of the assessment allowed for the distinguishing of strong and weak students. There were some excellent pieces of work which were awarded accordingly. The weaker students appeared, although this could not be confirmed, to be those whose first language was not English. These students tend to perform worse in examinations than coursework and therefore this is another reason to consider the balance of assessments.

Whilst there were some excellent answers at all levels I would have expected, especially at final year, for the students to have advanced their reading beyond the text books and for them to show evidence of this (usually through appropriate referencing) in both examinations and coursework.

There was only one module where I felt the examination had been marked more leniently than others at that level of study. The module itself was consistently grades but I am sure the standard of the weaker answers on this module would not have passed if they had been on other modules.

**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.*

As this is my first year I cannot comment on any changes. However, as detailed above there are a few areas of good practice:

1. Using a mix of assessment and integrating them (e.g. LUBS3845)
2. Providing some generic feedback on a piece of assessment to give context for the external examiner and feedback to the students (e.g. LUBS2850)
3. Clear feedback on the exam scripts (e.g. LUBS2010).

**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.*

I saw no evidence of this. However, as stated above, I did not see the teaching materials so it may have been included in the lecture/tutorial content.

**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**

I have received support this year from <> who was helpful and friendly both by email and in person. It was much appreciated.

**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.*

Overall this material was sufficient. Where information was missing – such as time periods for return – <> and <> were always extremely helpful.

**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.*

I received all relevant materials for each module. As detailed above I did not receive any programme information so could not comment fully in Q1 above. Some of the module handbooks were extremely detailed providing students with comprehensive information to undertake the module.

**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 received all draft exam papers/assessment. As detailed above (Q3) there was one paper where one question was not appropriate and this was changed following my comments. All other papers/assessment contained questions appropriate for their level. A couple of modules also provided the lecture slides relating to the exam questions which was also useful in determining the appropriateness of the question.

**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?**

Sufficient work was made available to enable me to have the confidence in the standard of evaluation. As detailed above (Q3) there were some scripts which were not clearly annotated or even showed evidence of marking. There was also little evidence on the scripts/assessments of 2<sup>nd</sup> marking or moderation. Where this did take place it was not clear how the agreed mark had been reached. Whilst some modules provided a detailed marking guide others were too vague/simplistic. This made it more difficult to make a judgement on the appropriateness of the marking.

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

I did not see any dissertations.

**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?**

The arrangements were excellent throughout the year. The administrative team was outstanding – always helpful and quick to respond. Unfortunately I could not make the first day which would have been extremely beneficial. I attended the second day and overall I was satisfied with the recommendations of the board. As was highlighted at the final board, there

was an issue of consistency between subject boards when given consideration of mitigating circumstances. I feel that whilst I am happy with the decision my subject board took, these decision would have been different if taken by a different subject board.

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

Following on from Q14 above, I believe due consideration was given to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence. However, there was an issue of consistency between the different subject boards. In addition, I feel it was not appropriate for some members of the subject board to have access to the information and others not but all being expected to make the decision.

**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 <>, <> and <> for guiding me through my first year and to <> for <> hospitality on the day of the exam board.

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 Marketing programmes.

I am pleased to note that you were so happy with the administration of the exam boards and paperwork, and that you felt the modules to be appropriate overall, with several areas of good practice highlighted.

With regard to your comment on the lack of programme-level information, I can certainly ask that this be included in examiner packs in future. One reason it hasn't come up until now is that the business school runs several programmes that utilise different combinations from the same pool of modules – so, for example, the big second year module LUBS2850 Marketing is a core module for BSc Management, BSc Management with Marketing, BSc Economics and Management and joint honours programmes, and an option for most of the other undergraduate programmes in accounting, international business, economics, etc.. Therefore, it is better for us that examiners look at certain modules rather than certain programmes, as the latter would involve several examiners looking at the same modules, although in your case, probably all marketing modules would utilise the same suite of programmes. However, your note about seeing the module in context is important. We should be able to provide examiners with a simple sheet detailing the programme aims of the programmes for which the module is core.

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.

I am concerned to hear that you spotted two similar exam papers, and several instances of little or no annotation for either marking or moderating. You have kindly provided the codes of modules where there is good practice, which I will flag to the team as examples. Are you able to provide the module codes for those where there are problems, so that I might talk to module leaders? – or, perhaps you have already flagged these with <>? Certainly we take all these issues seriously and I would like to follow them up.

Finally, I should note that there is no dissertation module in the marketing area (that question on the form is generic). But, your comment about the limited nature of students' reading and lack of research visible in the modules, indicates that we might want to look again at whether there is appropriate research led input in these modules, particularly in the light of the fact that there is no dissertation so students only have their taught modules to lead them into higher critical levels. It may be that providing external examiners with access to teaching material (easily done via access to Blackboard) would be the first step, but I will also look into whether the research element is present and at the appropriate level.

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 for 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