

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Leeds University Business School	
Subject(s):		
Programme(s) / Module(s):	LUBS0030	Introduction to Marketing
	LUBS1095	PT for Marketing
	LUBS1860	Fundamentals of Marketing
	LUBS2010	Consumer Behaviour
	LUBS2160	Principles of Marketing
	LUBS2840	Market Research
	LUBS2850	Marketing
	LUBS3190	International Marketing
	LUBS3530	Advertising & Promotional Mgmt
	LUBS3845	Marketing Strategy
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Marketing	

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

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 Quality Assurance**
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?

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

This is my second year, and some modules have made incremental changes which have improved the student experience. LUBS2850 moved to two exams per year from one which encouraged the students to engage with the first semester material at an earlier point in the module, LUBS3530 changes the type and structure of the exam question which greatly improved the quality of the exam and LUBS2010 improved the quality and amount of feedback it gave to the students on both the coursework and exams. However, LUBS3190 was marked generously but the moderator did apply an across the board reduction in marks. There are three areas where all of the modules could improve:

1. As included in my report last year, the assessments are heavily favoured towards exams. There is scope a wider variety of assessment methods especially new digital forms – video, podcasts, wikis etc.
2. Quality and amount of feedback provided to the students on both coursework and exams
3. There is a lack of evidence of any wider reading, especially at final year. The assessment criteria are predominately content based and therefore students can achieve a very high grade by repeating the lecture and text book material in depth. This only allow for a limited amount of critical thinking. I would expect there to be a requirement for students to show evidence of reading wider than that provided in the module – this should be both academic reading and industry reading. Students only provided the examples from the text book or lecture material. There was no evidence of engagement with the marketing industry literature (e.g. Marketing Week or Brandrepublic). This issues was also evident in the coursework where there was no assessment criteria for range and quality of sources or use of the Harvard referencing system.

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 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.*

As detailed last year (and above) the assessments were heavily weighted to examinations. There is scope to move to a wider variety of assessment, including new digital formats such as podcasts, videos or wikis. Overall the design of the assessment was reasonable, notwithstanding the above, LUBS2010, LUBS2160 and LUBS2850 could consider updating their cases studies.

Again, as highlighted last year, there was very limited amount of feedback/comments on the exam scripts. In one instance (LUBS3190) there was nothing written inside of the script. The only evidence of marking was a grade on the front. This was changed to a more suitable level before I signed off the module. The answers provided for the markers ranged in quality from very good (LUBS3530 or LUBS2850) to poor (LUBS3190).

As detailed above, the marking was appropriate to the assessment criteria (where provided) but they tended to be content focused rather than to the high levels of learning that would be expected, especially at final year. Therefore, there was no requirement for the students to engage in wider reading of either academic or industry publications.

Last year I commented that more modules should follow the lead and provide some generic feedback. Whilst this may happen I did not see any. This would have been helpful to allow me to place the grades in some form of context.

The amount of detail provided on some modules (LUBS3845 or LUBS2850) was excellent, very detail module handbook and instructions for markers. The statistics which accompanied the papers was also very helpful but module leaders could comment more on any changes from previous years. Two modules reduced marks across the board on the exam papers (LUBS3190 and LUBS2010) with no real explanation apart from they were high than other modules. Why were they higher? Was the marking too generous (I would agree on LUBS for this) or was the assessment criteria not appropriate? There was no discussion on possible changes for next year to prevent this happening again.

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 (as detailed above), 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. The lack of independent examples and the corresponding reliance on examples from lectures and text books only assesses the lower levels of understanding. Overall the full range of marks was used, however, at the lower end scripts at the very bottom (LUBS2740) were awarded marks for no content. This maybe due to the 20-90 scaling used as these marks would be scaled up anyway.

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 detailed above, the quality of the questions on the LUBS3530 exam was improved and moving from one end of year exam to 2 smaller exams at the end of each semester on LUBS2850 was also an improvement. There was also an improvement on the quality of feedback provided on LUBS2010 (not that this was poor before) and I strongly recommend this is used as a benchmark for other modules.

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 through the assessments viewed. As detailed above there was no requirement for students to engage with the current practitioner material to provide examples of academic models/concepts/theories being applied in practice. All examples were from core material and some were very old.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

N/A

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

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

N/A

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. 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.

On most modules this material was sufficient. However, on LUBS3190 the marking guide/answer sheet lacked sufficient detail. The assessment criteria for LUBS2840 only contained above 70 and below 40 for the group work and failed to include all grades in between.

11. 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.

Having access to Blackboard was helpful to provide more information on each module. I have not received any information on the programmes which these modules feed into.

12. 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 saw all draft exam papers and courseworks and all were appropriate. It was helpful to have a discussion with one module leader on the structure of a new exam (LUBS2850).

13. 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 received a sufficient number of scripts to have confidence in my evaluation of the standard of student work. As detailed above, the LUBS3190 initially did not provide any evidence of marking (first or moderated) apart from a grade on the front. This was rectified before final approval was given. For most exams the minimal amount of evidence/feedback was provided. I recommend LUBS2010 is used as a benchmark for how scripts should be annotated. The sheet which is completed by the 1st marker and moderator lacked any real helpful information. It usually just said a meeting was held. More information on how many scripts were moderated, any issues which arose, a detailed explanation of why marks were changed (individual or across the module) and what will be changed for next year to prevent this happening again would be more useful.

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

N/A

15. 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 attend the subject and final board. Throughout the year the arrangements were excellent, both and were extremely helpful and always quick to respond. It was good to see there were less special circumstances brought to the external board this year (following comments from last year) but there were still a small number.

Two issues arose at the board

1. The use of 9s in marking. It was questioned by the external examiners whether the department had a policy for dealing with 9s at the end of grades. By allowing 59/69 etc one student failed to achieve the higher classification by 1%.
2. A number of students were incorrectly awarded a fail at the exam board rather than a 'not assessed' or 'incomplete' as they had modules still outstanding due to extensions/special circumstances. These students should not have been considered for a classification until they had completed their studies.

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

The system of providing consideration to mitigating circumstances had been improved since the last year. However, it was still not clear how consistency of decision was achieved across subject boards.

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 their support. Also thanks to and for their company and excellent discussion during the day of the exam boards. It was very helpful to meet the module leaders to discuss their modules in more detail.

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3rd September 2014

Reference: External Examination Report 2013-14

Dear◇,

Thank you for your report as external examiner for the academic year 2013-14 in respect of the *Management* (Marketing) programmes.

I am pleased to note that you noted some incremental improvement in some modules and were generally content with the operation of the boards and hospitality. We were delighted to have you.

We have informed the module leaders for 3190 and 2840 about the concerns that you raised and will monitor the level of detail provided next year on moderation sheets. However, I must note that these meetings often take place under severe time pressure, owing to the need to turn scripts around quickly, which may be why tutors have not prioritised giving more detail in the past.

The issue of nines in the final module marks will be reviewed at the Faculty's Assessment and Feedback Group in time for any changes that arise from this discussion to be implemented for the 2014/15 round of assessment.. We also note that those students showing as 'F' in the board were not actually awarded a fail; this is not an error, but is a shorthand note for the purpose of these meetings and indicates that students have outstanding assessments to complete. It is perhaps unfortunate that this is signified by an 'F' but no student will see this.

Since last year we have reviewed the role of the pre-board and we are happy that this provides a forum for initial consideration of cases by members who represent the various subject boards.

On behalf of the Business School 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

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Dean, Leeds University Business School