

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):

LUBS0050	Introduction to Inter Business
LUBS1100	Personal Tutorials for IB
LUBS1140	Principles of IB
LUBS1145	Current Topics in IB
LUBS2400	Intn'l Economic Environment
LUBS2410	Small Business Internationalisation and Growth
LUBS2860	Managing IB
LUBS2875	Research Methods for IB
LUBS3250	Transnational Corporations
LUBS3320	IB Dissertation
LUBS3805	Int Business Management
LUBS3810	Managing Across Cultures
LUBS3840	European Business
LUBS3860	International Strategic Mgmt

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

International Business

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

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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

I am having to resign a year early due to other commitments . I have enjoyed my term as external and have seen substantive progress in a number of key areas.

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.*

I am comfortable that the standards of the programme outcomes. The structure and content of the programmes are commensurate with the level of award.

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.*

This issue has been raised in previous reports and it continues to be an issue. There is not consistent practice of articulating module learning outcomes and linking them to assessment instruments and learning/assessment outcomes. How the assurance of students achieving intended learning outcomes is fully evidenced is still an area of development for the team.

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 team do still need to consider

1. The adequacy of the multiple choice instrument in assessing students at the appropriate level. Very high marks in the module using this instrument suggests an imbalance
2. It is not clear that there is a systematic scrutiny of assessment instruments across the programme to ensure;
 - a) a well balanced portfolio approach (some assessment had close similarities).
 - b) that assessment instruments are well balanced in themselves across questions and have the level of clarity necessary for the diverse student body LUBS has.
3. The quality of some of the assessment instruments sent to the external examiner (grammar etc.) suggest a lack of robustness in the scrutiny process. I understand processes have now been put in place to remedy this

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.*

see 2&3

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.

There has been substantive progress on

1. level of engagement of academics with the internal moderation process
2. annotation of scripts to indicate why marks have been awarded
3. quality and consistency of marking across dissertations

There are still issues with regard to

1. consistency of marking across modules
2. linkage of module learning outcomes to assessment criteria
3. high marks resulting from use of multiple choice questions
4. content based marking schemes,

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.

This is clearly very strong. However an outcome of this is that the content based marking schemes reflect what the lecturers interests are and what they teach, they do not reflect what they need to assess in order to find out what students have learnt.

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

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

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.

I think the university processes are excellent

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.

I think the service offer from the central quality team is a model of best practice

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 do have concerns regarding the robustness of internal scrutiny processes for assessment and examination instruments. I was assured by the programme director that a project had been set up to deal with this.

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?

There were sufficient scripts and good progress has been made in this area with respect to my comments last year

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

I thought the standard of dissertations was good and was pleased to see the recommendations in my report last year had been taken on board. There was substantive improvement in the approach to the marking of dissertations

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 think the boards are very well run and the students given due consideration.

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

I am happy that due consideration was given to all students

Other comments

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

I have enjoyed my three year term and do thank the academic team for their support and for engaging in such a constructive manner to the feedback that has been given.

11th August 2014

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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 International Business programmes.

I am pleased to note that you comment positively on the standards of the programme outcomes and the positive influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching, and that you are satisfied that the structure and content of the programmes is commensurate with the award. I am especially encouraged to see that you have observed our progress on programme and module enhancements since last year. I was also encouraged to read your positive comments about the processes of the university, the support services provided by the administrative team in the Business School, and the management of the examination boards with due consideration being given to individual students.

There are a number of ongoing issues which you have raised again in your report this year. I am very glad to report that we have been working on these issues and various plans have been put into place. Below I will respond to these points individually.

Firstly, you comment that there is inconsistent practice in articulating module learning outcomes and linking these to assessment methods and outcomes. During the course of 2013/14, in preparation for the Business School's application for accreditation by the AACSB, an exercise has been undertaken both in the IB division and the Business School to redraft the programme aims and objectives and connect them better to the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Business and Management; to map module level learning outcomes to those of the programme as a whole, and for each level or year; and to clearly document and articulate how module assessments (and their respective marking and grading schemes) relate to and measure learning outcomes at both the module and programme level. Although this process is on-going as part of the AACSB accreditation application and the annual programme review, I am confident that it will lead to much clearer and transparent evidence about how the achievement of learning outcomes by students is measured and assured.

Secondly, you comment on the adequacy of using multiple choice question (MCQ) papers as an appropriate mode of assessment, and that you are concerned that the high average marks achieved by students may be indicative of a possible 'imbalance' between student ability and this type of examination at this level. As an assessment instrument, when used appropriately, MCQs can benefit teaching and learning. There are three core IB modules (LUBS1140, LUBS2860 and LUBS3860) that have MCQs as one component of module assessment. Overall module summary statistics for Level 1 LUBS 1140 and Level 2 LUBS2860 are comparable to those of other Business School modules. Level 3 LUB3860 has high mean value. The assessment strategy of LUBS3860 is quite complex, consisting of 30% simulation, 20% MCQ test in January and 50% exam. Within 30% simulation, there are five components: 2 presentations, 2 MCQ tests and final ranking based on simulation performance. Prior to the exam board, we analysed marks for various assessment components. The statistics for exam are comparable to those of other Business School modules. However, the mean values are high and the standard deviations are low for simulation and January MCQ test. Our analysis reveals, given the structure of the assessment, the high

overall module mean value is the result of student overall performance. Some students perform well on certain tasks but not others, and putting together, a majority of students have done well in this module. However, in view of your comments, soon after the exam board, we had detailed discussions and proposed changes for module assessment: replace MCQ test with a written assignment and change the order of assessments and the assessment weights. These changes aim to achieve more effective application of deep learning vs. surface learning, more effective application of module frameworks, theories and ideas to a real-life situations and organisations and better development of research-based skills. The proposal has been approved by the Business School and will be implemented in the coming academic year.

Thirdly, you note that there appears to be a lack of systematic scrutiny of assessment instruments across the programmes. The IB Division will be introducing a more transparent, rigorous, and thorough internal scrutiny process in the coming academic year. The plan is, after each module leader sets the assessment paper which is then scrutinised by a moderator. All assessment papers will be further scrutinised together to ensure clarity, presentation and quality and to avoid similarities in assessments across modules.

Fourthly, you comment on the consistency of marking across modules. During the course of 2013/14, within the IB Division, we have had various discussions on the need for more standardised rubric for marking. A form has been developed and will be roll out to IB modules in the coming academic year.

Following the success of last year's Validation Day, we again invited External Examiners to the Business School prior to Exam Board in an attempt to allow examiners dedicated time to scrutinise assessed coursework and exam scripts. I hope you found this useful and I am open to any feedback or suggestions on ways in which this may be improved.

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 over the last three years.

Yours sincerely

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Dean, Leeds University Business School