

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014**

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Leeds University Business School
<i>Subject(s):</i>	
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	LUBS1785      Intro Into Effective Decision Making LUBS2785      How Managers Make Decisions LUBS2790      Corporate Responsibility LUBS3885      Management Decision Making LUBS3895      Applied Management Decision Making LUBS3950      Current Issues in Decision Making LUBS3970      Fundamentals of Operations Management LUBS3980      Operations Management MECH2640      Economics & Management (Management)
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	Management

**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](mailto: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?*

Not applicable.

**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

My experiences as external examiner during my period of appointment (2010-2014) have been very positive. The following are some comments (in no particular order) on my experiences and observations during my tenure:

- Appropriate standards were achieved and maintained by students. Across my period of tenure I saw some excellent scripts/assignments. Some of the Exams were challenging for students within a two hour format – yet a significant number of students rose to the challenge and produced some excellent performances at the upper range of marks (eg mid-70s to low-80s). Good to see staff using the full range of marks.
- Assessments and marking criteria were appropriate and there was a clear gradient in performance/marks awarded from the weaker to stronger scripts/assignments
- Procedures have been followed in an appropriate and timely manner. The introduction of a Validation/Review Day followed by the Assessment Board day has worked well.
- Administrative procedures worked well and over the years of my tenure there were good (collegiate) engagement from, and relationships with, both academic and administrative staff. There was evidence of my comments taken on board from year to year, thus demonstrating enhancement/learning year on year.

Finally I wish colleagues and students at LUBS all the very best for the future.

**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 were appropriate for the content of the programme(s) and the level of the award(s). Standards are appropriate for the relevant award(s).

**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.*

Aims and intended learning outcomes were appropriate for the general business/management benchmark and are equivalent across other similar modules/programmes/institutions with which I am familiar.

**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.*

Across the modules I was responsible for, a range of assessment methods were used which were appropriate for assessing students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes. From the student performance demonstrated by the material I have reviewed, I would infer that the teaching, learning and assessment methods are of high quality. As expected there was a range of performance by students - the excellence of some of the material reviewed reflects well on both the students and the module teams.

**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.*

Yes – students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the aims and intended learning outcomes of the modules.

As I am reviewing modules across a range of programmes it is not easy to comment on a cohort in the standard sense of a particular year for a particular programme. This caveat notwithstanding, students in a number of modules showed strengths in the numerical aspects of some modules (eg relating to operations management); and in writing full and well-crafted responses to exam questions/assignments which demonstrated understanding as well as the ability to apply/evaluate concepts/theory. As with cohorts/students elsewhere, there was scope for some students to enhance their ability to analyse/evaluate as part of their responses to their assessments; and in their assignments to provide accurate/consistent good practice regarding citation/referencing conventions. For some assignments, weaker responses could have been strengthened by better following good practice in report writing (eg appropriate section numbers; clarifying the aim/structure of the report at the outset; providing a more value adding conclusion).

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

Not applicable.

**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.*

No specific comments to make here.

**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.*

Discussions with colleagues demonstrate the impact of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching. For example regarding the modules relating to decision making and operations management.

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

Not applicable.

**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**

Last session (2012-2013) I acted as mentor to a new External Examiner. Leading on from last session, this session (2013-2014) I was available as a potential sounding board/source of advice for my mentee. There was no communication required between myself as mentor and my mentee during 2013-2014.

## 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.*

Yes – the materials provided were appropriate, and sufficient, for me to act effectively as an External Examiner.

- 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.*

Yes – the materials provided (eg module handbooks, marking criteria, previous exam papers etc) were appropriate, coherent and facilitated my role as External Examiner.

- 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?**

Yes – I was provided with draft examinations/assessments as appropriate. The nature and level of the questions was appropriate overall. In the very small number of cases where I raised some points regarding the paper/assessment, module teams engaged with me in a collegiate way and explained and/or revised the paper/assessment to my satisfaction.

As I noted last year (2012-2013) my overall impression was that (again this year 2013-2014) I made fewer comments regarding enhancements to the assessment instruments than in previous years – reflecting (I think) that comments in previous years have been ‘embedded’ into the assessment instruments for this year. So evidence of good practice in that my comments have been acted upon (previous years) and also ‘taken forwards’ to this year.

- 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?**

Yes – the volume and selection of the sample of students’ work sent to me for review was sufficient for me to have confidence in my evaluation of the standard of student(s) work. The sample of work sent to me covered the various assessments undertaken by students; and spanned the range of marks awarded (eg from ‘fails’ to ‘1\*’).

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

Not applicable – I did not review 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?**

Administrative arrangements were satisfactory, including the operation of the Board of Examiners. I was able to attend the Board of Examiners and was satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

The Validation Day (introduced 2012-2013) prior to the Board was extremely valuable and worked

very well. Having the opportunity to have 'real time' discussions on any issues with module teams/programme leaders and others as appropriate (as it happens, I had less to discuss this year than last). The opportunity to meet more informally with colleagues at LUBS and fellow externals to build trust and collegiality was most welcome.

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

Yes – appropriate procedures were in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence. This was done in a way to ensure a fair and appropriate discussion of the issues.

**Other comments**

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

My experience continues to be positive: administrative/academic staff engaged very effectively with me, promptly providing me with materials and answers to any questions I had.

At the Subject and main Assessment Boards there were several discussions around students who had one (or several) module marks of 69 in their profiles. I think it may be useful if there was perhaps greater clarity 'up front' regarding the expectations, custom and practice of 'leaving' overall module marks at 69 (prior to the Board) and how such marks would be treated at the subject/award Boards. I think this clarity might be of use for module/programme teams as well as for the external examiners. [NB I accept that this comment would probably make most sense to those who were party to the particular discussions/points raised at the relevant Boards.]

As it is my final year as External Examiner then please see comments at the start of this document under Part B.

30<sup>th</sup> July 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 *Management* programmes.

I am pleased to note that you have found your time as external at LUBS to be so positive. It is good news that the comments you made in your earlier years can be seen to have been followed up and embedded.

With regard to your comment on the nine grades, this is something that we intend to address before the next round of boards. It came to the fore this year particularly due to a student who seemed to have scored nines in most of their modules - not a situation that is common, but it raises the question of nine grades. The policy on nine grades will be discussed and clarified with module leaders.

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 four years.

Yours sincerely

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Dean, Leeds University Business School