

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:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	DipHE Business Management Business Studies Foundation year
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Dip HE, BA

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
There are no matters for urgent attention.*

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 have been the External Examiner for the Dip HE for four years and in each of those years I have witnessed a steady improvement in the quality of the programme and that is reflected in the quality of the students work and their outcomes. There is an excellent team of people associated with this programme and their dedication to the ethos of widening participation and lifelong learning is evident in every aspect of their work and it is clearly appreciated by the students on the programme. There is now a much greater range of assessments being used and the introduction of new modules such as Business ethics have improved both the breadth and depth of the student learning experience and is clearly beneficial to them when they

complete their studies in the Business School. I am particularly pleased with the use of real business scenarios and business related documentaries in the assessment process thus enabling students to immediately see the relevance of their learning in the real business world.

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 learning outcomes are appropriate for this 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.*

The quality of this programme is at a level with other such programmes I have been associated with.

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.*

A wide range of assessment methods is used on the programme with assignments, case studies, work-based learning, in-class assessment and examinations used. Students respond well to these and that is clearly indicated by the improved quality of their work.

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.*

There is ample room in the types of assessments used for students to demonstrate their achievements and for their different strengths to be built upon.

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 have been no significant changes since last year but rather a consolidation of the developments from the previous year.

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.*

n/a

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.

The programme and module leaders were in contact with me during the year and all necessary documents were available as required.

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.

Assessments were sent to me at the start of each semester for comments and approval as were all resit materials.. Academic support staff for the programme are extremely efficient and helpful.

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?

All draft papers were received for approval and comments and any suggestions for changes that I made were acted upon by the team.

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?

Samples of all modules were provided, by post for semester 1 and in module boxes on my visit for semester 2. All modules had been internally verified and all documentation was available for me to see. On script comments for assignment work were particularly helpful as it demonstrates the quality of feedback and support given to students.

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 attended the examination board which was conducted in a very professional and efficient manner. I agree with all recommendations of the board.

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

All students who had submitted mitigating circumstances were considered and the outcomes reported to the examination board.

Other comments

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

Overall I am very pleased with the progress and development of the programme while I have been the external examiner. There is a small and very dedicated team working on the programme and their efforts are clearly appreciated by the students as is evidenced by the student module evaluations which often achieve satisfaction ratings in the high 90% area. The quality of student work has steadily improved over the period and I am confident this progress can be maintained by the team. I am particularly pleased with the improved referencing of student work and the innovative use of TV documentaries as the basis for case studies. The only negative comment I will make is that on some examinations there was no indication on the

scripts as to how marks were allocated – just a grade for each question. Clearly it would help with moderation and student feedback to see where marks had been allocated.

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xth November 2014

Dear <>

External Examiner's Report for 2013-14

I am writing to thank you formally for your work over the last year, and indeed over your whole period of appointment, as External Examiner for our Business Programmes. This has been a period of significant development for us both in terms of consolidation of the revised DipHE and development of the new full-time Foundation Year and Level 1 provision. Throughout, it has been of great value for us to have had the benefit of your observations as a practitioner who brings such relevant knowledge and experience and I know that <> and <> team have much appreciated the supportive way in which you have exercised your role.

Over the last few months, we have been considering feedback that we have received from our students, teaching staff and external examiners and formulating plans for the 2014-15 academic session. In the light of this, I would like both to respond to your own report and to give you a broader sense of our thinking across the range of the LLC's provision.

It is heartening to find that you "have witnessed a steady improvement" over your four years in office in the quality of our provision and of the students' work and achievements with a "much greater range of assessments" and the introduction of new modules that have "improved both the breadth and depth of the student learning experience". In particular, we note that you commend use of real business scenarios, including business related documentaries, in the assessment process as enabling students to link their learning directly with the realities of the business world. It is important, too, that you confirm the appropriateness of our curriculum design, standards and assessment processes.

Members of the team are encouraged by your praise for their work and recognition of their "dedication to the ethos of widening participation and lifelong learning". We note, however, and will address your recommendation that examination scripts should give more detail on how grades are determined than a simple mark for each question.

Moving on from your own field, please find enclosed a summary of feedback from all of our external examiners. You will see that your positive evaluation of our learning and teaching, feedback and support for students is shared across the range of examiners. Points for development are generally programme-specific though,

wherever appropriate, we are careful to ensure that recommendations are considered across our provision as a whole.

Feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Experience Survey continues to show a very positive picture, with strong satisfaction scores across all areas of the survey. It is particularly encouraging to find that students' satisfaction on assessment and feedback remains high (and significantly above national averages) in a year where we have introduced new assessment criteria and feedback arrangements. Please find enclosed a copy of our action plan for 2014-15 which summarises the data from surveys and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

During 2013-14, we also had our Student Academic Experience Review. This is a process which takes place every five years for all departments in the University. It involves formal review by a panel of colleagues from across the institution supported by an external reviewer, in this case the Director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at <> University. The panel considers documentation, including our own self-assessment, interviews staff and students and then formulates a report to the University's Taught Student Education Board. Please find this report attached, for your information. We have been very encouraged by its positive findings, including commendations for good practice, and have been working on following-up proposals for further development (as you will see from the action plan which I am also enclosing).

Thank you, once again, for all of your work on our behalf as External Examiner. It is good that you have seen positive developments over the last four years and we appreciate the part that you have played in enabling us to make this continuing progress.

With all good wishes,

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Interim Director
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