

## 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 Business School
Subject(s):	PR, Corporate Communications
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Corporate Communications and PR. Modules examined: Corporate Communications Project (LUBS5497); Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability (LUBS5427); Corporate Communications Strategy (LUBS5413); Internal Communications and Change Management (LUBS5442); Public Relations and Corporate Communications (LUBS5435); Public Relations in Practice (LUBS5438).
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc Corporate Communications and PR

**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?*

Yes – copies of the previous years externals report along with the previous years exam board minutes and module statistics.

**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*

Not applicable as first year of appointment

## 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 highly appropriate and clearly stated in the module documentation. Standards are appropriate for the award being considered and comparable to those programmes offered at other institutions. Structure of the programme is excellent and challenges students both academically and professionally (applied knowledge).

### 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.*

Yes. Information presented to students is clear and in line with the aims and ILO's outlined in the HEQ framework. This programme is comparable to others that I have been involved in both as a lecturer, programme leader and external assessor.

### 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 assessment on this programme is fantastic and students are given some great opportunities to develop both their academic knowledge and applied skills. Great blend of written and presented assessments, including evidence of very innovative assessments e.g. production of You Tube / online material as part of the assessment. The PR in Practice module is very engaging and clearly a lot of tutor effort goes into the assessment of this module, which offers students an excellent assessment experience. Marking is fair and there is evidence of moderation within the course team. Feedback at times could be a bit more detailed and it would be good to see more annotations on the student scripts. That said, students get clear indications of where their marks came from and how these could be improved in the future.

### 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 get a broad range of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and are able to achieve the aims and ILO's in a variety of ways through a range of assessment methods. There is evidence that students have been well supported in the completion of assessment activities and these compare favourably to those methods used at other institutions. Overall standards are very good although the marking scales feel a bit constricted in places (44-77, 56-75, 51-75, 57-74 and 50-70). The marking was appropriate so this could be down to the type / standard of the student on the course which is perfectly reasonable, although I would suggest the course team monitor the spread of marks in the future and remain aware that the marking scale goes from 0-100. It would also be good for the course team to review marks that end in 9. In one instance a mark of 69 had been (appropriately) moderated up to a 70 but a few 59's still remain and it would be good to see these given further consideration.

### 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.*

As this is my first year as external examiner it is not possible to comment on practice from previous years. That said, it is clear that feedback from the previous external has been taken on board and the course team are very proactive in contacting me to seek opinion and feedback on assessments that are currently being developed. I have been given copies of all assessments in advance of them being given to students, which is excellent practice. I have also been asked to review and comment on referral assessments, and received comments back from module tutors on my feedback. The course team are probably the most collaborative that I have worked with. Good use of generic assessment criteria and marking grids throughout the programme which aids students understanding of what is expected of them. There is some great assessment on this programme with the more applied elements of the coursework really testing student's ability to put theory into practice.

**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.*

Evidence of research informed practice coming through in a number of modules, particularly in social responsibility and sustainability. Students are exposed to current and topical case studies, and encourage to actively research current industry examples as part of their assessments. Good use of reflective practice as a learning tool that is also great to see.

**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**

As my first year as an external I was given access to a mentor which was much appreciated. I had the chance to converse with them prior to and during the exam board which was useful.

**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 was provided with a lot of material to help me in my role which was greatly appreciated. Not only was I given updates by the course team, but I was also supplied with course documentation and given access to the online learning portal for the programme. Questions and queries were responded to quickly and honestly. I would like to give particular thanks to <> who has been fantastic support and a very valued contact.

**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. I was provided with access on the courses online learning materials including course / student handbook, module information, assessments and tutor guides.

**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. All assessment material was sent to be in advance of it being given to students. Some great questions and tasks being set for students – some of which are quite challenging in what they ask students to consider. I was asked for comments and the course team responded these to quickly. As I have already mentioned, it was a very collaborative process and I remain confident in the quality of the programme.

**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. I was sent a broad sample of scripts along with the overall results for each module. This enabled me to gain a good overview of the overall level of achievement on the module. Some scripts were annotated on and others not, and I would encourage the course team to increase the level of annotations on students work.

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

I was not reviewing dissertations but the final project work (Corporate Communications Project) was of excellent standard. Some very innovative and challenging subjects – a couple of which I was able to learn something new from.

**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?**

The exam board was conducted in a professional and efficient manner. Aside a few issues with the presentations of marks on the projector screen, student marks and awards were given appropriate consideration and feedback from the externals was taken into consideration. I was impressed with the consistency of decisions made and having a clearly defined rule with regard raising classifications clearly paid off. I had plenty of time to talk to the course leader on the morning of the board and was introduced to several members of the teaching team – one of which was particularly useful in clarifying a couple of questions I had about an assessment.

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

Yes. Evidence regarding mitigation was presented at the board and discussed. This enabled suitable decisions that were in the best interests of the students to be made.

**Other comments**

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

I have really enjoyed my first year as external and want to thank the course team for giving me an opportunity to work with them. This is a great course with some excellent assessments. The course team are professional and committed, and I have learnt a lot during the last 12 months or so. There is some excellent practice in terms of teaching and assessment and it was pleased to note the number of distinctions awarded at the exam board across the postgraduate programme. I have just three areas for consideration by the course team as follows”

1. annotations on scripts – would be good to see more of this
2. reviewing of marks ending in a 9
3. better use of the whole marking range (0-100)

Overall a great programme and I have a lot of confidence in the continued development and quality of it. Looking forward to working with you over the coming years.

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18 May 2015

Dear <<>>

Thank you for your recent Examiner's Report.

We are very pleased with your comments on our Master programme in Corporate Communications and Public Relations, especially being comparable with benchmark standards, quality of marking and feedback relating to assessments, and the commitment of the Divisional staff to teaching and learning.

We are happy to hear that you feel that our assessment methods are appropriate with evidence that students have been well guided and supported. We also welcome your positive comments on the innovative teaching and assessment methods used in the programme. We appreciate your thoughts on increasing the detail in feedback and on broadening the spread of marks. We look forward to working with you on monitoring and reviewing these particular aspects of the programme in the future. Also, we note your comment about marks ending with '9'. Generally, we do aim to moderate these borderline grades and will give further consideration to such cases in future.

The praise that you have given to our staff is very rewarding and we are very grateful for your supportive comments and your guidance for our programme.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dean**

**Leeds University Business School**

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**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:	Business School
Subject(s):	<i>Marketing</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Semester 1: Marketing Research (LUBS 5450), International Marketing (LUBS 5460), Global Strategic Marketing (LUBS 5409), Marketing Strategy (LUBS 5465). (Plus x2 modules whilst waiting for new external to be appointed (LUBS5413M) Corporate Communications Strategy and (LUBS5438M) Public Relations in Practice). Semester 2: Global Distribution Supply Chain (LUBS 5478), Brand Management and Corporate Identity (LUBS 5432), International Services Marketing (LUBS 54720), Company Marketing Project (LUBS 5488), Dissertation Project (LUBS 5495M), Consulting Project (LUBS 5500M).
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc / MA

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

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**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?*

N/A

**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*

N/A

## 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 were appropriate for the programme(s)/modules. These outcomes were clearly stated in the documentation. Standards were appropriate for the award under consideration.

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.*

Expectations were met. The programmes examined had comparable standards to other Russell Group Universities. Aims and ILOs met expectations and were in line with 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.*

The assessment methods were clear across the modules. Students were given appropriate guidelines about the tasks that needed to be fulfilled as part of the assessment. The quality of teaching was evidenced by the work presented for external validation and was also reflected in the overall performance of candidates studying on these programmes.

There were some excellent examples of staff feedback on the coursework and projects. In the feedback staff provided students with concise information about the strengths and weaknesses of the work. In cases where students had received lower marks they were provided with excellent feedback on why the mark had been awarded. There was also clear evidence of double marking on this 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.*

Students were given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievements of the Aims and ILOs.

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.*

Overall, much good practice was demonstrated across the modules.

I was particularly impressed by the extensive feedback that was given to students on projects and assignments.

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.*

The curriculum was informed by current research and practice. There was breadth in the methods of assessment for assessing learning.

There was clear evidence of students applying theory to practice. Students were encouraged to show how academic theory could be applied to real life situations. Students also provided clear evidence of the benefits or otherwise of the different methodological tools that could be used to explore the theoretical elements of the course and applied these in practice.

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 information received was more than sufficient and enabled 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.*

As in the previous year I received appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which I had responsibility. This was given in an efficient and timely manner.

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?

Throughout the year I was kept informed and updated on all modules. Exam papers, answers and assignment contents were provided. The nature and level of the questions/tasks were appropriate and were of a high standard. Feedback was received positively and staff actively engaged with the process.

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?

Sufficient examined work was made available to me with accompanying mark schemes.

A range of examination scripts across the modules was provided for external validation. On balance there was clear evidence to demonstrate how and why marks had been awarded. However, I did ask for additional clarification from the internal examiners over the marks awarded on a few scripts. Whilst, I am confident that all work was double marked and appropriate procedures had been followed, on a small number of scripts clearer presentation of the evidence of second marking would have been helpful.

I would like to express my thanks to both administrative and academic staff for providing me with clarification when asked. This was done in an efficient and timely manner.

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

The project work and the feedback were excellent. The range of projects and the standards were very good.

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?

The administrative arrangements were excellent throughout the year. I was able to attend the meeting and I was satisfied with the recommendations of the board

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

Issues were raised in an appropriate way at the board and I was more than satisfied that appropriate procedures were in place and had been followed.

## Other comments

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

Overall, the programme is rigorous in content.

Standards were high across the different modules and there was a good mix between examination and coursework.

As observed last year, academic and administrative staff dealt with questions and queries in an efficient manner. This enhanced programme effectiveness and consequently I enjoyed working with colleagues in the process.



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18 May 2015

Dear <<>>

Thank you for your recent Examiner's Report.

We are very pleased with your comments on our Masters programmes in Marketing, especially our programmes being comparable with benchmark standards, quality of marking and feedback relating to assessments, and the commitment of the Divisional staff to teaching and learning.

We are happy to hear that you feel that our assessment methods are appropriate with evidence that students have been given adequate guidance and support. We also welcome your positive comments on the variety of assessment methods used in our programmes. Also, we note your positive comments on the innovative feedback staff give to our students on the different types of assessments we use in the programmes. We are pleased to hear that you were happy with the clarifications on marking in the few cases where this was helpful. We can assure that all our assessments are internally moderated according to our set process and we will endeavour to make this process is made clear to our external examiners.

The praise that you have given to our staff is very rewarding and we are very grateful for your supportive comments and your guidance for our programmes.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dean**

**Leeds University Business School**