

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>Economics</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Economics, Economics and Finance
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc

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 is nothing that needs 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?

Yes.

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

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 Programme Aims and ILOs reflects very clearly the level of the award. It provides students with both technical and more descriptive knowledge of the subject appropriate for an MSc. The programme also provides a nice balance between mainstream and heterodox courses.

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, they are in line with national subject benchmark

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 variety of assessment methods are used in this programme, such as group works, dissertations, exams, course works, which taken together highly desirable and develops some unique skills.

The markings were fair and consistent. Good feedback was provided in almost all courses, with Econometrics standing out in this respect.

My only suggestion here would be to space out the different assessments so that students get time between the assessments to work on the feedback and improve.

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.*

The students were given ample opportunity through a wide variety of assessments to demonstrate their learning. They covered both theoretical knowledge and real world applications.

The overall achievements were in line with similar programmes with majority around the 2:1-2:2 class. In general, students demonstrated good knowledge of both technical and descriptive parts.

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.

One thing that stood out, as good practice, is the level and nature of feedback in Econometrics (LUBS5134M). Students are not only interested in feedback on their overall performance but also how they stand relative to others. Econometrics was the only course where for each question, the students were told if their marks was higher or lower than the average. I think it would be tremendously beneficial for students if other courses also adopts similar feedback methods.

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 current research of the staff is clearly reflected in the modules offered. There are a wide variety of courses which is based on one of Leeds research strengths and that is heterodox economics.

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.

Yes it is.

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 did.

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?

Most papers and assignment were appropriate, and I had made some comments on a few cases, which were taken in to account.

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 had seen sufficient number of assessed and examined work to have confidence of the standards. Almost all assessed and examined scripts were clearly marked and had feedback in them.

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

Yes and the method of assessment was appropriate.

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 Board meeting. In general the process was satisfactory. The only thing I would suggest is that those who fall in the discretionary range should not automatically be moved up to the next level.

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

There should be a more thorough discussion of the issues, particularly for people in discretionary range.

Other comments

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

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18 May 2015

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your recent Examiner's Report for the MSc in Economics and the MSc in Economics and Finance.

We are very pleased with your comments on our programme, especially those pertaining the diversity of assessment methods, and the balanced plurality of economics content, involving both mainstream and heterodox courses. Your comments provide a rewarding acknowledgement of the effort made by our teaching team in providing modules reflecting the research expertise of our Economics division.

We are happy to learn that you regard our assessment methods to be appropriate and diverse, and consider our marking fair and consistent. We much appreciate your help in identifying and recommending "best practices" among our modules. Following your advice, we will make sure to disseminate across our other modules the good example set in our Econometrics module concerning student feedback.

We also intend to implement your most appreciated suggestion regarding the spacing of different assessment so that students have the required time to improve their learning and performance based on the previous feedback.

Your highly positive evaluation of our staff is very rewarding, and we are very grateful for your supportive comments and your guidance toward enhancing our programmes.

Yours sincerely,

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Dean

Leeds University Business School

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