

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diploma of Higher Education in Business Management 2. Business Studies with Foundation Year
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diploma of Higher Education 2. BSc

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?

Yes I was provided with the previous year's report in hard copy. However the link to the electronic versions of previous reports did not work (http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22163/examiners/846/external_examiners).

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

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 the awards 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.*

The programme and the quality of work reviewed are at levels comparable to other programmes I have been involved or 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.*

There is a wide range of assessment methods used across the programme and a mixture of assessments employed – essay, report, case study, exam, presentation, journal, PDP, reflection pieces (including video) – to test the students.

The variety offers students diverse opportunities to demonstrate their ability and application in a range of subjects using differing mechanisms. Most modules have two assessments offering students the chance to gain valuable formative feedback and measure their own development.

The assessment methods and their design are highly appropriate to the ILOs, the nature of the programme and the cohorts' needs.

The quality of work reviewed demonstrates student engagement with the teaching and learning approached and reflects the choice and implementation of the assessment methods.

Modules used clear frameworks to guide the student through the areas to be assessed and marking was fair and consistent, thereby reflecting the work presented.

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 clearly are many opportunities for students to demonstrate their level of achievement; the programme consists of a suitable combination of modules which, as mentioned, utilise a variety of assessment methods.

I confirm that the standards demonstrated by the students in the course of this review are comparable to students on similar courses.

At the higher end there are many examples of excellent ability, application and attainment; there are many high performing students who demonstrate consistently excellent levels of knowledge and skill development.

However at the other end there are students who have struggled despite the efforts of the programme/teaching team. In part this can be attributable to the nature of the students on these programmes and the additional challenges that they face.

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.

1. During semester 1 this year, the programme team delivered HRM and Marketing to the part-time year 2 Dip HE cohort on a block delivery basis (i.e. each module was delivered in 7 week blocks so the students did HRM for 7 weeks and then they did Marketing for 7 weeks). Students were surveyed in advance of this change and were all agreeable and willing to try it. However post-module feedback was mixed and the team has therefore decided to go back to the old way of running both modules side by side and semester long.

2. The Dip HE is dual accredited so learners who complete the Dip HE award are also awarded a CMI Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management without the need to undertake any additional assessment.

3. Integrated Skills for Business Students really uses the section for student improvement (Recommendations for future assignments).

4. Finance modules use the full range of marks, and some modules could use this further e.g. Intro to Marketing.

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**

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 leader was in regular contact during the academic year and all required documents were provided by module leaders and the programme administration staff.

These were clearly explained to me by the programme leader.

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 provided at the start of each semester for feedback and approval – these included marking criteria.

Module material was provided including module handbooks and marking criteria.

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 examination papers/assessments were provided by email at the beginning of each semester. The questions / assessment briefs were appropriate to the nature and level of assessment.

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 confirm that sufficient work was made available in the samples provided to enable a sufficient review of the work. Samples were sent by post for semester 1 and on site for my visit in semester 2. Information provided was appropriate, clear and easy to follow.

Marking was fair and consistent, and reflected the work presented; scripts were clearly annotated and feedback provided on a grading sheet where applicable. Feedback was appropriate, clear and constructive, and broken down according to the stated expectations.

Moderation of assessment briefs was evident throughout but there could be clearer evidence of moderation of grades.

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?**

The administrative arrangements were very good and clear for the whole process; the operation of the Board was fair and consistent, and the arrangements clearly explained to me as it is my first year as an examiner here. The Board operated in the best interest of the students while upholding the regulations of the University.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place and sufficient time given to give fair, consistent and thorough consideration, discussion and deliberation of mitigating circumstances. Staff had detailed knowledge of their students and their issues.

Other comments

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

There is an issue with reviewing graded presentations - perhaps the module leaders concerned may consider recording a sample.

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18th December 2015

Dear <>

External Examiner's Report for 2014-15

Over the last few months we have been reviewing reports from our External Examiners along with feedback from students, including the results of the National Student Survey of finalists and the University's Programme Survey which covers those in other years of study. I am now writing to each Examiner both to respond to reports individually and to give an overview of the outcomes of this annual review.

It is always of particular interest to read the first report from any External Examiner since this brings a fresh perspective to bear on our provision. We are encouraged to see that your initial observations are that learning outcomes are appropriate, standards comparable to those elsewhere and assessment processes "fair and consistent". You also commend assessment methods as "highly appropriate" for the learning outcomes and sufficiently wide-ranging to provide students with "diverse opportunities to demonstrate their ability" and "chance to gain valuable formative feedback". We note, too, that you feel that assessment is providing students with appropriate opportunity to demonstrate achievement at different levels and that you are content, given the widening participation focus of this provision, with the range that you have observed from examples of "excellent ability" to instances where students "have struggled despite the efforts of the programme/teaching team".

In your discussion of developments to the programme, you draw attention to good practice in two modules: the effective use of the student improvement section of the feedback process in Integrated Skills for Business Studies and use of the full range of marks in finance modules. We shall look to extend both into other modules over the coming year. As colleagues may have mentioned, we shall also be undertaking a major review of our part-time programme during 2015-16 in anticipation of picking up teaching of the Honours level next autumn. Your feedback on these developments during the course of the year will be much appreciated.

Alongside your own report, we have also received observations from our other External Examiners and feedback from students through the NSS and the University's Programme Survey. We are encouraged to see consistently positive messages from all of these sources and look, of course, both to build on good practice where this is identified and to address any issues that are raised. Please find attached, for your information, a summary of our external examiners' reports along with our action plan for 2015-16 which captures our student scores and

feedback and sets out the key developments that we are looking to take forward in the current year.

I should like to close by thanking you for all the work that you have undertaken during this first year as our External Examiner for Business Management. We appreciate the breadth of experience that you bring to this role and the care with which you have reviewed students' work and given us feedback. I know that and team have valued the contact that they have had with you and appreciate your thoughtful and constructive observations.

Yours sincerely,

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Director

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