

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:	Leeds University Business School
Subject(s):	<i>International Business</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
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

Regarding the handling of student disputes, in light of this year's grievance issue, please bear in mind for the future that both the students and the external examiner should be involved in dialogue about how student concerns can be satisfactorily resolved without sacrificing academic quality or paedagogic value. I would, finally, emphasise that teaching teams need to develop collective standards through a friendly and collegial process of discussion and consensus

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 are appropriate, Some courses, however, are not using the full range of marks, with no failing grades and/or grades confined to a narrow 60-75 range.

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 aims and objectives were in line with courses at this level.

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 appropriate and in line with those successfully used in previous years. Greater communication needs to be engaged in within larger marking teams to ensure a collective standard is agreed upon and maintained.

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 performance of the students was, on the whole, in line with previous years.

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.

No new assessment methods were noted, but the use of case studies in assessment continues to be effective.

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.

Academics' research continues to inform teaching, and this is to be commended.

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

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.

In most cases, yes. However, in the case of LUBS5213, I was not made aware of a student grievance until quite late in the proceedings, when I should have been involved at a much earlier stage.

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?

I was not provided with at least one resit assignment for LUBS5213. While it is understandable due to changes in the administrative team, I would encourage greater vigilance in future.

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, however, two of the sample dissertations' mark sheets were transposed.

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

Yes.

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?

Yes, subject to the notes made above in #12 and #13.

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

Yes

Other comments

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

I would like to thank the administrative staff for their tireless efforts, and also the programme director and lecturing team for their responsiveness to queries.

<<>>

08 April 2016

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your Examiner's Report for the MSc International Business programme. We are very pleased with your comments that confirm the strength of the programme; in particular, you confirmed that the use of case studies in assessment continues to be effective and academics' research continues to inform teaching, and you also commented positively upon the responsiveness of the programme director and the lecturing team to queries during 2014/15.

We further noted the following comments that suggest areas of improvement:

A With regards to the handling of student disputes, e.g., the student's concerns regarding LUBS5213M this year, you commented that:

"Regarding the handling of student disputes, in light of this year's grievance issue, please bear in mind for the future that both the students and the external examiner should be involved in dialogue about how student concerns can be satisfactorily resolved without sacrificing academic quality or pedagogic value. I would, finally, emphasise that teaching teams need to develop collective standards through a friendly and collegial process of discussion and consensus"

"However, in the case of LUBS5213M, I was not made aware of a student grievance until quite late in the proceedings, when I should have been involved at a much earlier stage."

Response: First of all, we would like to thank you for offering your support in dealing with the recent matter. Members of the programme team have now been made fully aware of the importance of internal agreement, particularly that module leaders should follow latest LUBS code of practice (<https://lubswwww.leeds.ac.uk/TSG/code-of-practice/>) and be rigorous with internal check marking and moderation process, and that the programme team should work together to resolve student concerns. We would also emphasise that we are always supportive in gaining external examiner input into issues arising, and where we are considering changing marks that have been submitted it is a requirement. Moving forward we will engage external examiner input at an earlier stage when addressing problems. For the programme team, all members have been made aware of this comment and the present Programme Director (PD) has generated the following action points for the academic year of 2015/16:

Based upon the latest LUBS code of practice (<https://lubswwww.leeds.ac.uk/TSG/code-of-practice/>), the action taken and to be communicated to this year's cohort are as follows:

1. We will have a new more detailed rubric and guidelines in place for the professional skills module.
2. The oral presentation is proposed to account for 40% of the 10-credit professional skills module in 2016/17 (subject to school's approval in Feb 2016); for the present academic year of 2015/16, this assessment accounts for 20% of this 10-credit module (instead of 40% of a 30-credit module as in 2014/15).
3. MSc IB employability tutor and also module leader of the new 10-credit module above will act as second markers in ALL presentations along with the Personal Tutors who will act as first markers.
4. The students are given during the induction a detailed plan of whom to approach, when and how when they need to raise a complaint/query regarding their marks in one (or more) assessments. This procedure has been communicated to the staff and they will be reminded of the relevant LUBS's policies, marking procedures, and complaint procedures. This is described in the five steps below.
 - a. When a student has a complaint about a mark and the feedback, he/she contacts the module leader first.
 - b. The module leader agrees to meet with the student to explain in more detail what he/she did and didn't do to deserve the awarded mark.
 - c. If the student is unsatisfied he/she contacts the module leader explaining that he/she is not completely satisfied and subsequently the students and module leader contact the Programme Director.
 - d. The PD meets (phones or emails) the module leader so that <<>> can have a better picture of what was said with the student.
 - e. The PD meets the student and discusses with (reminds) him/her what the processes for marking, moderation of assessments and the role of the external examiner are. The PD also explains to the student the process of "the Student Complaints Procedure" (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_complaints.html) and the appeal, etc.
 - f. The divisional DSE in International Business is made aware of these issues as soon as possible.
 - g. If the issues persist the PD and the DSE will contact LUBS PG office (i.e. <<>> and/or <<>>) who in turn will facilitate the communication with the MSc IB External Examiner.

B With regard the range of marks, you commented that:

"The learning outcomes are appropriate, some courses, however, are not using the full range of marks, with no failing grades and/or grades confined to a narrow 60-75 range."

Response: All members of the programme team has been made aware of this comment and will closely monitor the range of marks used and will employ an effective second marking process to ensure marks are reasonably spread across the full range. Furthermore, the programme team will follow a recently implemented school level Guide on Assessment and Feedback where levels required to attain scores across the range of marks are articulated and guide on using these levels is provided to students and staff.

C You further commented on marking that:

"The assessment methods were appropriate and in line with those successfully used in previous years. Greater communication needs to be engaged in within larger marking teams to ensure a collective standard is agreed upon and maintained."

Response: All members of the programme team has been made aware of this comment and will work closely to agree upon a collective standards, and the present programme director will work with key module leaders to ensure that the practice is carried out effectively.

D You commented on assessment aspect that:

“I was not provided with at least one resit assignment for LUBS5213M. While it is understandable due to changes in the administrative team, I would encourage greater vigilance in future.”

Response: Thank you for this feedback, it is our policy to send all assessments to the external and we are aware that due to the timing of the paper and the issues with this module it was not sent in this instance. We will work to ensure in future you receive all documentation.

On behalf of the Division may I thank you again for your suggestions and comments; we greatly appreciate the assistance you have given to us.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dean
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