

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>Business Analytics and Decision Sciences</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	MSc Business Analytics and Decision Sciences 5308M Business Analytics & Decision Science; 5309M Forecasting and Advanced Business Analytics; 5311M Sports Analytics
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

n/a

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?

I saw the minutes of an exam board for postgraduate degrees held on 24/10/13.

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 programme aims and key learning outcomes are entirely suitable for the level of the award. The samples of work I saw were of a standard suitable for a post-graduate 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 programme delivers the key aims and learning outcomes that would be expected in similar programmes. The programme aims essentially to develop decision-oriented quantitative analytical skills and apply them within a business framework. The learning outcomes are consistent with this aim.

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.*

Assessment strategies are appropriate given the expected learning outcomes and aims. The module assessments give students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts, methodologies, and quantitative techniques of analysis. In general all the modules I surveyed had appropriate assessment instruments, which were challenging and at the right level. The marking rigour exhibited by the course team was first class. There was evidence of moderation of the work. Student performance indicates high quality teaching and well thought out assessments.

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.*

From the work I saw the performance of students on these modules is of a comparable standard to similar students at other institutions. The numeric skill of some students, as evidenced by their performance on quantitative questions, was of a high standard. The parts of questions that require reflection or critical reasoning were less well done overall. As noted above, the assessments allow all learners to show their abilities, as well as allowing the most able students to demonstrate their knowledge.

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.

n/a

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 assessed coursework for Module 5311M required students to write a report identifying the critical success factors in a particular sport using statistical analysis of performance data. Essentially, students had to research this topic by examining particular data sets. The module leader is well known for his research on critical success factors in team sport and it is evident that research in this area has influenced the design of the module and its assessed work. This module serves as an excellent example of how to incorporate academic research into the curriculum.

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 was fine.

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.

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 saw drafts of all papers/assessments. Papers were appropriate to the level of the award. Assessments were well designed. I was invited to give comments on drafts.

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 saw enough assessed work to form a proper evaluation of the work. Marking was fair, accurate and consistent. There was sufficient annotation for me to see how marks had been awarded. Written feedback given to students was detailed and helpful.

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 could not attend the board.

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

n/a

Other comments

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

<<>>

08 April 2016

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your Examiner's Report for the MSc Business Analytics and Decision Sciences. We are very pleased with your comments on our programme. What you say about Professor Bill Gerrard's module (LUBS5311M) is particularly welcome; it is indeed a good example of bringing a lecturer's special expertise into learning and teaching for our students.

On behalf of the Programme team, thank you for all your input during the year.

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: 2014– 2015

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Leeds University Business School (LUBS)
Subject(s):	Management
Programme(s) / Module(s):	LUBS5202M0: Risk Perception & Communication LUBS5710M01: Business Analytics
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MBA; MSc

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

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 Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
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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

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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

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.*

I found the aims and ILOs to be appropriate for the programmes and modules that I examined. I believe that the standards of the programmes and modules were appropriate for the award and award elements that were 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.*

Yes – I believe that they are commensurate with other HEIs and HE 'industry' standards.
- 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.*

From the coursework assignments and exams scripts that I have examined, I believe that the assessment methods are appropriate and rigorous in terms of their structure and content. I also believe that the arrangements for marking and the classification of awards are generally appropriate and well-founded, as are the teaching, learning and assessment methods.
- 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. I thought that the standard of student work was generally very high, with some very good pieces of coursework and exam essays. Not being involved in other Business Studies programmes, I cannot comment on the relative performance of LUBS students to students on comparable courses at other HEIs.
From the coursework assignments and exams scripts that I have examined, I believe that the standard of students at LUBS is very good.
I did not notice any weakness in the cohort as a result of the documents that I examined.
- 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.

N/A – this is my first year of external examining at LUBS.
- 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.

In the scripts that I examined, there was some evidence of the influence of research on learning and teaching in the (Business Analytics?) module concerning case studies of organisations.
- 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

- 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 - I was provided with all necessary information and documentation.

- 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.

- 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 – I was provided with such documents and I approved the majority of them without suggested amendments. In the few cases where I thought the documents needed to be altered in some way, my comments were adopted by the relevant lecturer.

- 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. But there were no in-text comments on the essays I reviewed (for which module, I can't recall), which meant that I based my judgement only on the front-sheet summary comments of the marker. Seeing the in-text comments as well would have enabled me to obtain a fuller picture of the assessment process, thus giving me even greater confidence in the assessment process.

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

N/A - I didn't examine any dissertations.

- 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. However, due to teaching commitments, I was unable to attend the Board of Examiners' meeting, so I am unable to comment on the Board's recommendations.

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

I expect so, but can't comment as I didn't attend the Board.

Other comments

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

I have no further comments.

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12 April 2016

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your comments on our programmes. In particular, we were pleased that you felt the assessment methods, examination arrangements and assessment techniques were generally appropriate. We were also happy to note your remarks regarding the high quality of student work you saw.

We noted the following comment:

A There were no in-text comments on the essays I reviewed (for which module, I can't recall), which meant that I based my judgement only on the front-sheet summary comments of the marker. Seeing the in-text comments as well would have enabled me to obtain a fuller picture of the assessment process, thus giving me even greater confidence in the assessment process.

Response: This comment has been referred to the Faculty Assessment and Feedback working group to be looked at as a whole-School issue. This group is currently reviewing the marking criteria and guidance we give to PG students and markers, including what written feedback should be provided. Once this piece of work has been completed, we will be happy to send you details.

On behalf of the Division may I again thank you 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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