

## 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:	Management
Subject(s):	<i>International Business</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	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](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*

No urgent matters

**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*

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.*

In my view the intended learning outcomes and the structure and content of the programme are appropriate for an award of this type. I also consider that the standards achieved by the students are appropriate.

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 ILOs are comparable with other similar programmes in institutions of the type of Leeds and meet relevant 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 assessments methods (with one minor exception) are well set, marked and the feedback to students is good. This indicates good teaching of appropriate material to the students and that the assessment types are appropriate and marking of these assessments is fair and consistent and allows the students to demonstrate their abilities. The minor exception is the tendency (in at least one case) for multiple choice tests to inflate final marks for modules. I have spoken to staff about this and I understand that this issue will be tackled in the forthcoming cohort of students.

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.*

In my view most of the students were able to demonstrate high level of achievement of the aims and ILOs of the programme. I consider that the students compare well with similar courses of which I am familiar. Many of the students display high level understanding of the major issues in International Business and have good abilities to convey their understanding in written work. Among a few of the students there is a fairly heavy reliance on textbook sources, but on the whole the students were familiar with the major literature.

5. **For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum**

NA

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.*

This is my first year as an examiner so I cannot comment on this issue.

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 many of the modules there is good evidence of familiarity with current research in the core areas of international business and international management. In a very few cases some modules are a little light on material from contemporary research, for example institutional theory and elements of resource base theory. In discussions with staff it was apparent to me that these issues are already understood and are being considered for future delivery of the modules.

8. **Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

NA

#### 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**

NA

**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 extensive material about my role and give lots of opportunities to clarify any issues about my role.

**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 to all of these questions. The policies and procedures are I think consistent and accurately match to what external examiners are asked to do.

**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 to all these questions.

**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 work was made available to enable me to have confidence that the marking is fair and consistent. There is some differences in the annotation of the work is in some cases second marking/moderation was clearly evident, but in a few cases the annotation did not clearly indicate that this process had taken place

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

In a very few cases the subjects of the dissertations could have had a stronger International Business focus. On the whole however the choice of subjects was appropriate. The method and standard of assessment in the dissertations 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?**

The answer to all of these questions is yes. The support of the administrative staff was excellent. The Board was conducted in an efficient manner with due considerations to the interests of the students. I was very satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Yes this was very efficiently done with careful consideration of the sensitive nature of th various circumstances that affected the perfoamcn of the students.

**Other comments**

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

I think this programme is high quality and gives students an excellent experience and provides them with good knowledge and skills that I am sure will help the students in their future careers. The course team are clearly aware of the very few minor concerns that I had and were already seeking how to best tackle this for the next cohort of students taking the modules.

Leeds University Business School

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Wednesday, 02 December 2015

***Reference: External Examination Report 2014-15***

Dear

Thank you for your report as external examiner for the academic year 2014-15 in respect of the International Business programmes.

I am pleased to note that you comment positively on the standards of the programme outcomes and the positive influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching, and that you are satisfied that the structure and content of the programmes is commensurate with the award. I was also encouraged to read your positive comments about the processes of the university, the support services provided by the administrative team in the Business School, and the management of the examination boards with due consideration being given to individual students.

There are a number of issues which you have raised in your report this year. I am very glad to report that we have been working on these issues and various plans have been put into place. Below I will respond to these points individually.

**A. You comment that multiple choice questions (MCQs) as an assessment instrument may inflate final marks for modules.**

There are two core IB modules that have MCQs as one component of module assessment and they account for 20% of the overall module marks. Our careful examination of the module summary statistics for Level 1 LUBS 1140 and Level 2 LUBS2860 indicates that they are comparable to those of other Business School modules. However, in order to address your concerns about this type of assessment we will be taking the following two actions:

1. In 2015-16, the MCQ questions will be designed to be more analytical and application based.
2. In 2016-17 we will replace MCQs in LUBS2860 with an alternative assessment strategy so as to achieve more effective application of deep learning vs. surface learning, more effective application of module frameworks, theories and ideas to a real-life situations and organisations and better development of research-based skills.

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**B. You note that in a very few cases some modules are a little light on material from contemporary research, for example institutional theory and elements of resource base theory.**

We strongly agree with you on the importance of presenting contemporary research in teaching. The IB programs as a whole have covered the contemporary research that you have mentioned. As you know we have introduced a new module to final year students, LUBS3815 Contemporary Research Topics in International Business. The module considers key up-to-date developments in both the theory and practice of international business research. The module is taught by all professors and associated professors in CIBUL and the topics are around these colleagues' most recent research output in leading IB, economic and management journals.

**C. You comment that in a very few cases the subjects of the dissertations could have had a stronger IB focus.**

Dissertation topics will be monitored to ensure that they have an IB focus.

On behalf of the Division may I again thank you for your suggestions and for your comments on our modules, our programmes, and our examining. We greatly appreciate the assistance you have given to us over the last year and for your invaluable contribution to our programmes.

Yours sincerely

Dean, Leeds University Business School