

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

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

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Leeds University Business School
<i>Subject(s):</i>	Management
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	LUBS2085, LUBS2065, LUBS2900, LUBS2970, LUBS307001, LUBS300801, LUBS 3980, LUBS398001, LUBS3910
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	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

No matters require 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?

not applicable

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

not applicable

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 modules that I reviewed were appropriate for the level of the award and addressed the Intended Learning Outcomes. The programme addresses a range of business related areas that I would expect to see on a management degree to ensure students have a broad and relevant knowledge to transfer to the world of business.

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 meets the requirements for the 2015 Subject Benchmark for Business and Management in terms of skills and knowledge being developed on the course. It also meets the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in terms of the level with course content and assessment being appropriate for both the level 5 and level 6 modules that were reviewed.

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 modules reviewed utilised a range of assessment methods to develop and test both the skills and subject knowledge of the students. Assessments included examinations, presentations, essays, reports and a reflective log discussing personal development. The methods chosen in each module were appropriate for the topic being assessed. The breadth of assessments provide a coherent framework across the course to provide an appropriate learning experience.

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.*

Through the modules students were provided with an opportunity to meet the aims and the intended learning outcomes. Marking on all modules was across the range reflecting individual student abilities. High quality work was rewarded with appropriate grades in the higher classifications whereas work of a lower standard, lacking criticality and evaluation, was awarded grades in the lower classifications. The standard of work is comparable to students on courses at other institutions where I have examined, as well as my own university.

As a cohort there are no specific weaknesses as work to a lower standard was on an individual basis. International students tend to be towards the lower grades but since work is anonymised it is difficult to identify high performing international students as their language skills are good to warrant higher marks.

Strengths of the cohort at the higher end include an ability to critically evaluate and apply theoretical concepts to practice. Students are articulate and provided well-reasoned answers that were supported by academic research.

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

Not applicable

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.

The modules provide a well-balanced programme and reflect a contemporary curriculum. Enhancements have therefore been on an ongoing basis to ensure the relevance of the modules to current business practice. Good practice includes modules using live business cases and one module allows students to complete a project with an outside organisation. It is excellent to see theory and practice being combined as this allows students to fully understand the topic being addressed.

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.

Modules address contemporary business issues that deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the subjects. Students had to complete research projects for a number of pieces of coursework allowing them to apply theory to practice. From the assessments set and comments upon marked scripts staff are knowledgeable within their field and provide students with a learning experience based on research. The academic environment within Leeds University Business School ensures students develop a sound understanding of business concepts.

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

not applicable

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**

I have acted as mentor for a new external examiner. I made contact at the beginning of the year to introduce myself and offer support. The new examiner did contact me during the year but required minimal support.

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.

I have had sufficient access to all material required to fulfil my role. Administrative support is excellent and any questions were answered promptly with appropriate guidance and information.

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.

I received all the necessary information regarding the programmes and the modules. If required, additional information was supplied by the School.

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?**

For all modules I was provided with draft examinations and assessments for approval. Most assessments were appropriate in terms of nature and level so were approved immediately. Where minor issues/ suggestions for improvements were made these were addressed and the papers approved,

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?**

A suitably sized sample was provided for each of the modules. The sample covered the range of marks awarded so I was able to make judgements that standards were consistent across the programme. Where high grades were awarded this was clearly warranted by the quality of student work. A number of failed pieces of work were also provided and again the grades were warranted as the work did not meet a pass standard. Overall, scripts were clearly annotated and graded so that students would be able to understand how their final mark was achieved and identify areas for future development. Two modules particularly provided excellent, high quality feedback and this was noted on the module sheet as these tutors should be commended. Some exam scripts were lacking in annotation though. Where this occurred it was more difficult to ascertain how the mark was awarded. This lack of annotation was noted on the specific module feedback sheet so that staff are aware.

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

I did not review 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?**

Administrative arrangements in Leeds University Business School are excellent and staff should be commended. Work was forwarded in an appropriate and timely manner. Semester 1 modules were reviewed several weeks in advance of the board with the remainder being reviewed on the external examiner day. Any questions were answered promptly and effectively. I attended the exam board and I was satisfied with all the recommendations. Grades were considered fairly and consistently with university regulations being applied appropriately. For borderline cases careful consideration was given to the grade profile to ensure that where possible students benefited from the regulations to award in the higher category.

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

Careful consideration was given to students with mitigating circumstances and staff were supportive of students who had experienced difficulties during the academic year that could have impacted upon their studies. Appropriate evidence was available and staff dealing with mitigating circumstances knew the students and could explain the situation. Regulations were applied to benefit the students and where required, additional time to take assessments.

Other comments

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

The Management provision at Leeds University Business School is excellent and the course director is supportive and responsive to students to ensure they have a positive learning experience to achieve to their potential.

Leeds University Business School

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W business.leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Wednesday 26th October 2016

Dear

Thank you very much for your Examiner's Report for the Management programme. We are very pleased with your comments on our programme. In particular, I was happy to see your positive comments about the administrative arrangements and course staff.

We noted the following comments:

- **International students tend to be towards the lower grades but since work is anonymised it is difficult to identify high performing international students as their language skills are good to warrant higher marks.**

Response: This is an issue of which we are keenly aware, and a member of staff is currently undertaking research into how we can target support for certain cohorts, particularly at dissertation but across other modules. While it would be unrealistic to try to make every student's experience identical, we hope to find out more about how we can tailor some support to those working in a second language and narrow the grade differential as much as is academically possible.

- **Some exam scripts were lacking in annotation. Where this occurred it was more difficult to ascertain how the mark was awarded. This lack of annotation was noted on the specific module feedback sheet so that staff are aware.**

Response: Thank you for noting this on the sheets; it is useful if staff hear this directly from the external examiner. Although we have issued numerous reminders to staff, it is a perennial issue that large cohorts in particular are often marked under severe time pressure and this tends to minimise staff ability to make notes on scripts. However, it is Business School policy that scripts are annotated, so we will keep up the reminders.

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, and I look forward to meeting you once more at next year's examination board.

Yours sincerely,

Dean, Leeds University Business School

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