

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

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

Faculty / School of:

LUBS

Subject(s):

International Business

Programme(s) / Module(s):

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

MSc

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 gat@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 for urgent attention have emerged.

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

The main development over the period of my appointment has been an increase in class sizes and correspondingly of teaching team sizes, which has led to challenges in terms of ensuring consistency in marking. There has also been a continuous struggle to retain high standards in the face of increasing pressures to produce high grade averages. I would generally commend those Leeds faculty who have risen to these multiple challenges. My thanks to the administrators, and to <<>> and <<>>.

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 ILOs were in line with previous years and comparable to those at the same level at other universities.

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 were comparable with programmes at the same level at other UK universities.

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 generally appropriate. Where this is not the case, it has been indicated in the relevant course.

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 students generally demonstrated a good level of intellectual ability, particularly on the dissertations and on the assignment for Foreign Entry Mode Strategy. One or two courses were marked a little high, which was indicated in my reports for the courses and noted.

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.

The programmes were similar to last year's; however, there was greater attention paid to ensuring the external examiner had all the relevant material. More markers seem to be marking on a broader spectrum, which is a positive development.

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 curriculum broadly relates to the research interests of the faculty, and the dissertations to students' own research interests. Case studies are well used on exams.

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

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, but I would like to remind LUBS that a new External Examiner is needed.

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 guidance was sufficient and accessible.

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 was provided with appropriate documentation.

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?

As far as I am aware, I was provided with all draft examination papers and assessments; my comments were passed on to the assessment teams.

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 assessed work was made available to me. For the most part scripts were clearly marked; exceptions are indicated in the examiners' report for each module. For the most part examiners' comments were also sufficiently detailed for me to be able to evaluate the assessment process (again, the few exceptions are noted where relevant).

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

The choice of subjects for dissertations was appropriate, as was the method and standard of assessment.

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. It was particularly good that I was able to examine the dissertations some time in advance, as I was unable to come up to Leeds until late the previous evening.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place.

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

LUBS continues to perform well academically, with assessment taking an interesting and creative variety of forms. Many of the students' responses are excellent, and tutors are to be commended for encouraging their performance. The increase in student satisfaction ratings for the programme on the PGT Programme Survey undoubtedly reflects this.

I would also commend LUBS on successfully overcoming the problems with assessment last year, and developing ways to ensure consistent standards despite the continued growth of class sizes and the corresponding need for larger marking teams.

While this is no longer as widespread an issue as it was, some examiners are continuing to grade high, and I would raise this as a continuing concern in light of ensuring LUBS' reputation for exacting academic standards.

This is my final report as external examiner, and I wish my successor well for the future.

<<>>

31 March 2017

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 and the successful overcoming of the assessments problems from last year. I am also delighted to read that you recognize that despite the increase in class sizes and the corresponding increase in teaching team sizes, since your initial appointment, LUBS has continued to perform well academically and retain high teaching, marking and research standards.

In particular, you have confirmed that the assessment methods were general appropriate, scripts were clearly marked and feedback comments were sufficiently detailed.

You raised one issue:

- **While this is no longer as widespread an issue as it was, some examiners are continuing to grade high, and I would raise this as a continuing concern in light of ensuring LUBS' reputation for exacting academic standards.**

Response: All members of the programme team have been made aware of this comment and we 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 and are not too high. 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 a guide on using these levels is provided to students and staff.

On behalf of the Division may I thank you again for your hard work, commitment and for providing us with your invaluable advice and guidance over the past few year. We greatly appreciate the support you have given to the MSc IB programme.

Yours Sincerely,

<<>>

**Dean
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The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015– 2016

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Leeds University Business School
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	LUBS5210M Marketing for Management LUBS5211M Marketing Management LUBS5249M Creative Industries Management LUBS5422M Consumer Behaviour Across Cult LUBS5747M Global Marketing Management LUBS5775M Sales Management LUBS5851M Marketing
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc MBA

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Completed report

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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, no issues

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?

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

Throughout the period I have been involved with external examining for the various marketing modules, I have found them to be of an appropriate standard for masters level study, involving assessments which are appropriately challenging and which have the opportunity to differentiate between candidates. I have found the quality of work, in general, to be very good, but also a tendency to over-inflate the marks at the bottom end of the cohort. I have found the marking and assessment and examination board procedures to be of a good quality

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 have found the Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were indeed commensurate with the level of the award, and that standards were appropriate for the award element and its level.

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.*

I have found that the Aims and ILOs did meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)

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.*

I found the assessment methods, the arrangements for marking and classification of awards, as well as the seeming appropriateness of teaching, learning and assessment methods, as evidenced by student performance, were appropriate and in line with the ILOs

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.*

My feeling is that the assessments did provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs

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 applicabile

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 which were reviewed were very consistent in practice and outcome to prior years, with no significant need for enhancements

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.

It was apparent from the nature of the the assessments set, and the responses provided from students, that there had been a strong influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

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.

I felt that this material was sufficient for me to act effectively as an External Examiner.

- 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

- 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

- 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?**

I had a diary clash with an overseas visit and was not therefore able to attend. I was able to provide my input to the board prior to the meeting and had previously found the boards to be well run

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

Yes, they certainly have been at prior boards

Other comments

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

No further comments

<<>>

31 March 2017

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your Examiner's Report for the Executive MBA programme. We are encouraged by your comments that confirm the strength of the programme. In particular, you confirmed that throughout your tenure as external examiner assessments have been appropriately challenging and that the quality of work, in general, has been very good, and academics' research continues to inform teaching. However, you have also noted a tendency to over-inflate the marks at the bottom end of the cohort.

A With regards to the issue of inflated marks, you noted:

- ***A tendency to over-inflate the marks at the bottom end of the cohort***
- ***Whilst marking standards in general tend to be satisfactory, there is a tendency to be a little too generous around the pass/fail boundary.***

Response: First of all, we would like to thank you for identifying and noting this. At our EMBA Away Day in September 2016, the programme team were made fully aware of the importance of this issue, particularly that module leaders should follow latest LUBS code of practice (<https://lubswww.leeds.ac.uk/TSG/code-of-practice/>) and be rigorous with internal check marking and moderation process. 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 the external examiner at an earlier stage when addressing this issue. The Programme Director will also monitor final grade averages, ranges and standard deviations, and compare them to previous year results. This should act as an indicator for whether the issue is repeating itself and whether we should draw the External Examiner's attention to this end of the distribution of marks, and ask their advice regarding amending marks.

B With regard to assignment feedback, you noted that:

- ***Academic staff generally tended to provide a good level of feedback for students, although the use of grids to provide feedback should not be a substitute for qualitative commentary. Many colleagues provided excellent feedback, but some not.***

Response: Whilst your comments relate specifically to Marketing modules, the Programme Director and the teaching team have taken this opportunity to review this process across all modules. This issue was an agenda item at the EMBA Away Day in September 2016. There was some discussion on the use of standardised grids. The consensus was that a standardised grid should not be adopted as this may inhibit more context-specific, qualitative feedback (as noted in your comments). The decision was taken to identify and share the exemplars of good practice. The module identified as a 'best practice' feedback example by students was the 'Organizing and Managing Performance'. This module has been replaced in the revised EMBA programme with the module 'People and Behaviour in Organizations' but is being taught by the same tutor, so the aim is to share anonymised examples of feedback with teaching staff across the team to send out a clear signal as to what level of feedback students expect. This should act as a benchmark for other tutors. However, it is acknowledged that the level and nature of feedback will vary depending on the subject, for example if the subject is qualitative and narrative in nature rather than quantitative.

On behalf of the Executive MBA 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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