

## 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:	Business School
Subject(s):	Marketing
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Semester 1: Marketing Research (LUBS 5450), International Marketing (LUBS 5460), Global Strategic Marketing (LUBS 5409), Marketing Strategy (LUBS 5465). Semester 2: Global Distribution Supply Chain (LUBS 5478), Brand Management and Corporate Identity (LUBS 5432/5433), International Services Marketing (LUBS 5472), Company Marketing Project (LUBS 5488), Consulting Project (LUBS 5500M).
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	MSc / MA

**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

None

**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

I have very much enjoyed serving as an External Examiner at Leeds Business School. Over my period of appointment I have found the administrative and academic provision excellent. The administrative process throughout the year was irreproachable (as in previous years) and so was the commitment of staff to the courses that were being offered and taught.

The School has a dedicated administrative support team who have ensured that I have received an appropriate level of scripts/assessment for external moderation and feedback. Likewise, over the period I have received copies of assessment in a timely manner. A range of initiatives has been implemented to ensure quality control across the programmes, which was pleasing to see.

The breadth of assessment and quality of the programme have been excellent overall. This year the marking and assessment by academic staff was exemplary. There were clear instructions to students to show how the marks had been awarded. Building on the feedback that I offered in my 2014/2015 report I was pleased to see that there was tighter internal moderation of the marks across the courses and a stronger audit trail showing how these marks were agreed and internally moderated. Where questions were the same across modules, additional internal moderation was undertaken across the cohort to ensure consistency in the mark allocation and moderation processes. This was very good.

I am very grateful to all staff for the help, support and assistance they have offered towards me over the past four years.

## 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.*

As stated in previous years the aims and intended learning outcomes were commensurate with the level of the award and standards were 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 met the expectations of national subject benchmarks and were comparable with other Russell Group university 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.*

As in previous years there was a broad range of assessment methods used across the different modules. This is in my opinion a strength of the programme. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods were endorsed further by student performance.

The documents provided evidence to indicate that students were clearly informed of what they needed to do to achieve marks across the spectrum. There was clarity in the explanation as to how marks would be allocated, submission method and penalty processes, etc., and there was very good feedback given to students to explain how marks were allocated, in terms of both strengths and weaknesses. This was the case for all the modules that I assessed. However, in particular this year the Marketing Consultancy Project (LUBS5500M01), Company Marketing Project (LUBS5488M01) and the Market Research (LUBS5450M01) modules were excellent both in terms of what the students produced and the feedback given by staff. I did have one query re the data on the mark sheet of the Company Marketing Project module. This has since been checked by the administrative team and I believe clarified and amended as appropriate. Outside of this correction no other marks were adjusted.

The level of feedback offered to students on the Brand Management & Corporate Identity modules (5433/5432) (as demonstrated in previous years) was very good.

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.*

Instructions were clear and students were given adequate opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs. The academic standards demonstrated by students were comparable with my experience of other courses being taught at Russell Group Universities.

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.*

Overall, the level of feedback was high in terms of the range of comments offered on the coursework assessments and showcased the good practice deployed across the modules. This year all staff had clearly tried hard to ensure the exam scripts contained clear evidence of double marking, script annotation and the signing off of documents across modules. This was really good and was the case for all the subjects externally moderated.

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.*

Curriculum design was informed by current research and there was a range of excellent examples whereby staff and students demonstrated how they had engaged in linking theory with practice. As mentioned in point 3 of the document, the Marketing Consultancy Project (LUBS5500M01), Company Marketing Project (LUBS5488M01) and the Market Research (LUBS5450M01) modules were excellent and showed explicit links between theory and practice.

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.*

The information that was provided was more than sufficient for me to act effectively as an external examiner both in terms of the materials that were made available to me during my visit to Leeds and also by the electronic files that I received that related to the assessments over the year and the model answers.

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.*

As in previous years I received a range of documentation – and the administration of this documentation throughout the year, as with previous years, was excellent.

**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 provided with draft examination papers/assessments. The nature and level of the questions was appropriate for the modules assessed. However, the multiple choice questions sent for external approval for modules LUBS5465M/ LUBS5409M contained a number of grammatical errors and so were returned for correction. Staff responded quickly and appropriately when this was pointed out and a revised file was sent with the amendments. The revised file was fine and was subsequently approved. No further problems were incurred with this module. The exam scripts made available to me for modules LUBS5465M/ LUBS5409M provided evidence that my feedback had been taken on board and it was noticeable that suitable arrangements were made to consider my comments. I can confirm that when I looked at the scripts for these two modules during my recent visit actions had been taken and the documents that I looked at regarding these modules provided evidence that the module leaders had worked hard to correct the problem. In this capacity the scripts were appropriately marked, moderated and annotated.

Cross curriculum the standard of marking for these modules was excellent, contained relevant feedback, provided evidence of double marking etc. This was very well done and I am grateful to all staff for this.

**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/examined work was made available to me across the range of courses, along with cohort mark sheets. Building on my earlier feedback staff comments/marks were clearly annotated on the relevant documents across module and there were some excellent examples of staff feedback. Modules showed clear evidence of internal marking and consistent feedback from both first and second markers.

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

The choice of project topics was broad and appropriate. There were some excellent projects submitted. The standard of assessment was excellent and consistent across all the markers.

**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 did not attend the meeting this year.

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

Yes – to my knowledge

**Other comments**

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

**EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME AS A WHOLE**

The courses that I examined were excellent in the teaching methods deployed, the range of assessment offered, the level of advice given to students prior to submission and feedback given after submission. The nature and type of the questions were thought-provoking and were of an appropriate standard for assessment at postgraduate level. The assessment materials/assessment briefs were research-led in style and showed a clear link between theory and practice. As mentioned in previous years my overall assessment is that this is a well run course. This remains my opinion. In general standards are high across the modules and the design and delivery methods enhance the student experience. I wish colleagues well with their future programmes and I thank them for their hard work and the support that they have offered me during my time as external examiner.

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31 March 2017

Dear <<>>,

Thank you for your recent Examiner's Report.

We are very pleased with your comments on our Masters programmes in Marketing, especially our programmes being comparable with benchmark standards, quality of marking and feedback relating to assessments, and the commitment of the Divisional staff to teaching and learning.

We are very pleased to hear that you enjoyed serving as an external examiner at the Leeds University Business School. We also note your observation of the breadth and quality of our assessments that you found to be excellent overall. Your kind comments and suggestions made during your tenure as an external examiner has particularly contributed to tighten internal moderation of our assessments and marking. As a result of your comments we managed to implement several initiatives to ensure quality control across the range of assessments.

We also note your observation of evidence that indicates clear communications with students related to assessments and clarity of explanation as to how marks would be allocated, and the detailed feedback. You particularly note marketing Consultancy Projects (LUBS5500M01), Company Marketing Project (LUBS5488M01), and Marketing Research (LUBS5450M01) as excellent both in terms of what the students produced and the quality of feedback given by the staff.

We very much appreciate your contribution to our programmes during your tenure as the external examiner which helped us to improve on both breadth and quality of assessments across the range of modules you examined.

We are very grateful for your supportive and constructive role and your guidance for our programmes.

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: 2015– 2016**

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

Faculty / School of:	Business School
Subject(s):	<i>Marketing</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	<i>Advertising and Marketing; International Marketing Management</i>
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](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

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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*

*No matters for 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?*

I was not provided with copies of previous relevant external examiner reports and the schools responses to these though the existing external examiners that I met were very generous with their experience and provided additional information about previous years, recommendations made and actions taken.

**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 ILOs are commensurate with the level of the award. For some associated modules, the design and instructional words of some assessments (exam papers; continuous assessment) are not challenging students to engage in critical analysis and wider reading. This is a concern on some modules which only have 1 piece of assessment (exam only; one individual/group assignment).

### 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 programmes are comparable with similar programmes at other institutions and against national benchmarks in terms of content; student performance and awards made. It is worth noting that the student numbers you are dealing with are significantly higher than those at other competitor institutions. The marketing division should be commended for how they have coped with increasing student number though caution is advised about further increases and the inevitable effect on student experience and academic standards and quality.

### 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.*

In general, there is an excellent array and diversity of assessment methods with some very innovative practice. The assessments are very applied and practice focused and prepare students well for employment post-graduation. Some consideration should be given to integrating more critical analysis and academic engagement into course assessment.

### 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.*

Students have adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and ILOs. Comprehensive module and programme level stats show that attainment within and across modules and at the programme level is in line with programme from comparable institutions.

#### Strengths

1. Engagement with practice and real world case studies
2. Diversity of sectors and marketing activities explored
3. Majority of students attaining a merit/distinction on both programmes
4. Clear development of professional skills

#### Weakness

1. Less engagement with academic literature than on comparable programmes
2. Inconsistent referencing and formatting across module assessments.

### 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.*

This is the first year of my appointment. I have identified a number of areas of best practice that are worthy of highlighting.

1. Introduction of the assessment board to review module statistics and performance in advance of examination board. It is excellent practice to have the external examiners present at both boards.
2. Excellent standard of paperwork, administrative support and assessment/exam board management
3. Introduction of the Failed Exam Feedback Form
4. Robust and fair management of students with mitigating circumstances
5. Clear evidence of internal moderation
6. Very clear and detailed exam answer guidelines



**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.*

Research led curriculum and module design and deliver was not explicitly highlighted in the sample and associated paperwork provided. The marketing division are a mixed team with some teaching only and teaching and research staff. I would greatly appreciate more detail being provided that maps and showcases research led curriculum and teaching when I return in 16/17 including applied and pedagogic research examples.

**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.*

Very clear, comprehensive module packs (and associated programme and regulations documentation) with supporting material and necessary paperwork was provided in a timely, convenient and ordered manner.

**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?**

My appointment started mid cycle and I saw all the exam papers from appointment. The majority were of the appropriate standard. Where comments were made, the teaching team(s) took these on board.

Some exam papers that I had not reviewed and approved were targeting more knowledge and understanding rather than critical analysis/synthesis. Instructional words (explain; outline; describe; list) were encouraging a more descriptive style answering. While I support the use of multiple choice at this level, I would advise that other exam paper sections need to be much more testing, stretching and critically focused.

**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 – the module packs were excellent with a comprehensive set of scripts across the marking range made available. Excellent answer guidelines provided

Marks were clearly evident on exam scripts. There was very limited annotations and/or written rationale (and associated feedback) to explain the marks awarded. Copies of the generic exam feedback provided for each module (and discussed at the exam board) would greatly aid external examiners in assessing the consistency, fairness and standard of exam script marking.



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

I was not responsible for reviewing dissertations for the programmes I am assigned to.

**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?**

Excellent standard and delivery of administrative arrangements. They are a credit to the institution and one of the most organised professional service teams I have encountered in my external examiner experiences. They should be highly commended for the care and attention given to the programmes, students, academic staff and external examiners alike.

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

Yes – the procedures are robust, transparent and fair.

**Other comments**

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

The following are some concerns I had about the modules reviewed. These are primarily associated with inconsistencies between marking schemes, bespoke assessment marking grids, the use of the 0-100 marking scale across all assignment components, the final marks awarded and the feedback descriptors used.

1. A few modules reviewed had only group level assessment – not clear how individual learning outcomes are being determined on these courses. I would ask the marketing division to reflect on these courses and consider them within the programme as a whole and whether ILOs are being attained through a group only approach to assessment.
2. The use of component marking (sections being marked out of 5; 10; 15; 25; 30) is evident across modules - why is the full marking scale (0-100) and then subsequent weighting not being used. Not using the full marking scheme for all marking activity is reducing degrees of freedom available in the marking process. While I understand the rationale for it, I have concerns that it can lead to polarised (over and under) marking especially for essay based exam answers/assignments.
3. For some module (and in particular Professional Skills and Employability), a lack of internal consistency between the bespoke marking grids being developed on modules, the general marking scheme for LUBS and component marks awarded was identified. While I wholly support the use of bespoke, assignment specific grids, much better consistency between these, the general marking scheme, component marks and final assessment marks is needed if students are to really appreciate the expectations and requirements at different grade boundaries across modules and programmes. For example: a mark of 85% was awarded to an essay on Professional Skills and Employability when three of four sections were highlighted as being between 70-79. Some of the 70-79 sections though were not marked in that range with the component marks awarded – Section A and B were awarded 17/20 (85%) and 18/20 (90%) respectively despite the 70-79 marking criteria being shaded. This is repeated in other assignments in the sample and on other modules reviewed.
4. Across the modules, there were examples of inconsistency between marks awarded and feedback provided – satisfactory presentation; good analysis feedback given for assignments marked in the 80s. These feedback descriptors are not in line with the general marking scheme descriptors for work in the 80-89 range. This pattern was repeated across grade ranges and assessment types.

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31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Dear <<>>,

Thank you for your recent Examiner's Report for MA Advertising and Marketing.

Thank you for your input at the examination board. We welcomed your positive feedback on the diversity and innovation of assessment and the applied nature of some of this which directly supports graduate employment. We were also pleased to receive your comments relating to student performance on the programme, development of professional skills, clear and comprehensive documentation and your general points on good practice. Your comments relating to the excellent service from our Student Education Services team have been passed on to the relevant staff.

In relation to more critical points these issues have been outlined below with a response:

- **Previous Examiner Reports**

I have requested that the report from the programme examiner from last year is sent to you along with our response.

- **Level of critical analysis in assessments**

We note your comments relating to wording on assessments and will seek to improve the design and instructional words of assessments in order to achieve greater criticality. This academic year LUBS has introduced an examination scrutiny panel at divisional level which gives us the opportunity to screen more effectively examinations. For semester two and future papers we will endeavour to address this issue.

- **Student numbers**

Thank you for your commendation relating to the division's handling of large numbers. We have already introduced for the next recruitment cycle some measures which will ensure numbers will not increase and we hope that that admissions will reduce to a level no greater than the 2015/16 cycle.

- **Research led curriculum**

At a standard level this is reflected in specific set questions in module reviews completed by academic staff. As the programme director writes the annual programme review this month they will aim to extract relevant comments from module leaders to send to you which will give some indication of the role of research in each module.

- **Marking**

We note your comments relating to some lack of annotation on exam scripts. The enrolled numbers have had an impact on marking and some staff are challenged to meet the relatively tight turnaround deadlines. The Programme Director will request that generic feedback published to students is made available to you for this session.

We also note your comments about use of the full mark scale, weightings, internal consistency and consistency between marks awarded and feedback provided. At the forthcoming divisional taught student education meeting the Programme Director will remind staff about the need to use appropriate rubrics and highlight the descriptors on the LUBS generic marking guidelines. With respect to your specific comments on Professional Skills and Employability, a different marker is

involved this year and your comments have been highlighted. Should the same issue relating to the grid reoccur we will seek to address this via changes to the marking rubric.

- **Group assessment**

The level of group work and group work accounting for 100% of the assessment was reviewed in 2013/14 in line with AACSB mapping and reconsideration of programme learning outcomes. The core module of Marketing Research is an AACSB AOL measurement point for group work. It was felt that a sizeable project of 6,000 words is necessary in order to enable students to fully develop relevant knowledge and skills in addition to working as a team, hence the 100% weighting. The 100% group work in Direct, Digital and Interactive Marketing, which is an optional module, was justified on the basis that it facilitates participation in the national IDM student competition, helps the professional development of students interested in a career in this field and the project brief set by the IDM involves a substantial amount of work, again hence the 100% weighting. In both cases groups are supported directly by meetings with tutors.

We hope that this helps to address your comments and look forward to working with you over the next year.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dean**

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