

# 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):                   | <i>Management</i>   |
| Programme(s) / Module(s):     | MSc Organizational Psychology<br>MSc Business Psychology<br>MA Organizational Behaviour |
| 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?*

No. I did see the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### 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.*

ILOs are appropriate for the awards at Masters level and commensurate with similar programs offered by other institutions.

**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.

**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.*

Students are required to show in-depth critical analysis and application of psychological knowledge to real world problems. Assessments are varied across the modules allowing for a fuller assessment of student performance.

**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.*

On average students are comparable with those on other similar courses. Those at the high end of marks are performing to a very high standard illustrating critical debate and argument development as well as evidence-based analysis of material.

**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 my first year so cannot comment.

**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.*

There is a large research methods/statistical component in the MScs and MA courses. This is to be expected for these types of degrees.

**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 had sufficient access to all material (coursework and examinations) in addition to information on module marks, second marking and tutor feedback. This was provided in a timely and highly organised 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.*

I received marking criteria and sample answers, but I did not receive programme handbooks which would have been useful.

**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. The nature of the questions was appropriate and where some queries were changed they were commented on in a timely and effective manner by the module tutor.

**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. Scripts/coursework were clearly marked (and second marked) with feedback provided either on the exam paper or a separate sheet for coursework.

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

Yes, the topic areas and methodological approaches were appropriate for Masters level.

**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?**

All administrative procedures were excellent. The Board of Examiners operated in a clear and organised manner, resulting in appropriate decisions being made given the boundaries of Institutional/School requirements.

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

Yes.

**Other comments**

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

I must thank the administrative team for a seamless process and the teaching team for providing a positive learning experience for students on the three courses. Assessments are appropriately challenging and engage students on evidence-based practice approaches. There is a clear critical analysis element built into all assessments. Marking was fair and appropriate with excellent, developmental feedback provided for the students. Overall, I am happy with the quality of the learning and assessment process for the three Masters courses.

I would like to raise a few issues which I outlined in the Board.

1. I am uncertain as to what information students receive regarding style conventions for the dissertation modules. Across reports the presentation of tables/figures and statistical notation was varied – in some cases quite poor presentation. I wonder if the teaching team could (if not already) specify a style convention for the dissertations and provide students with resources (e.g. online) to help them with this.

2. While there is nothing inherently wrong with an 11,000 dissertation, I would recommend the team consider what they are trying to achieve with this assessment in terms of enhancing student skills (especially from an employability context). Perhaps the teaching team could consider including different forms of dissemination of the research for different audiences as part of the assessment.

3. Only apparent at the Exam Board, but an issue arose where a student received a MSc award and another only a PG Dip award even though the latter student scored on average higher than the former. Both only failed one module (different modules), but the former failed a module deemed not core and the latter one deemed core. Looking at the profile of marks, I felt this was very harsh – especially as it was not clear what the rationale was for some modules being core and some not. Indeed for BPS accreditation, all modules should really be core. I realise that under current rules, an appropriate decision was made; yet I would ask that the teaching team think again about the difference between core and non-core modules.

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31 March 2017

Dear <<>>,

Thank you very much for your Examiner's Report for the MSc Organizational Psychology, MSc Business Psychology and MA Organizational Behaviour programmes. We are very pleased with your comments on these programmes. In particular, we were really pleased to hear your view that the assessment process as a whole is appropriately challenging and engages students on evidence-based practice approaches. We were also appreciative of your recognition that marking across the programmes was fair, and that students on the three programmes were provided with high quality developmental feedback.

Thank you also for your useful suggestions which will undoubtedly help us to continue to improve the quality of our programme provision. With particular reference to the three key points that you highlight in your report, we have taken the following actions:

***“1. I am uncertain as to what information students receive regarding style conventions for the dissertation modules. Across reports the presentation of tables/figures and statistical notation was varied – in some cases quite poor presentation. I wonder if the teaching team could (if not already) specify a style convention for the dissertations and provide students with resources (e.g. online) to help them with this.”***

Thank you for raising this very good point. We have fed this back to the module leaders for the Dissertation modules and for our Advanced Research Methods module. They have agreed to embed this into their taught module content with immediate effect.

***“2. While there is nothing inherently wrong with an 11,000 dissertation, I would recommend the team consider what they are trying to achieve with this assessment in terms of enhancing student skills (especially from an employability context). Perhaps the teaching team could consider including different forms of dissemination of the research for different audiences as part of the assessment.”***

Thank you for discussing this matter with the programme team during your visit. Since the meeting they have discussed this at length and have recently applied to our Programme Approval Group to change this word count, in line with your feedback.

***“3. Only apparent at the Exam Board, but an issue arose where a student received a MSc award and another only a PG Dip award even though the latter student scored on average higher than the former. Both only failed one module (different modules), but the former failed a module deemed not core and the latter one deemed core. Looking at the profile of marks, I felt this was very harsh – especially as it was not clear what the rationale was for some modules being core and some not. Indeed for BPS accreditation, all modules should really be core. I realise that under current rules, an appropriate decision was made; yet I would ask that the teaching team think again about the difference between core and non-core modules.”***

Thank you for drawing this to our attention. The original programme specifications stated that all modules were core. It seems that the change in status for some modules has occurred unintentionally, during a process of module re-articulation, and had previously gone unnoticed. The programme team has therefore applied to the Programme Approval Group to change this from September 2017.

Thank you once again for all your work over the past 12 months.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dean**

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