

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Subject(s):	Business Management
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Diploma of Higher Education in Business Management (part time) Business Management (part time) Business Studies with Foundation Year (full time)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	Dip HE, BSc

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner

Title and Name of Examiner:	
Institution:	
Address for communication:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

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

There are 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?

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

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 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are commensurate with the level of the award(s)

The Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules, the structure and content of the programme are appropriate. The programmes are very carefully structured to support the development of foundational knowledge, skills and behaviours, and then enable the subsequent enhancement and advancement of these as the students make progress through the programme of study.

The content of the programme is suitable for this subject and level, offering a variety of subjects that combine with and complement each other, and provide comprehensive perspectives into business.

The learning outcomes are appropriate for the awards under consideration.

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 meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark and the programme is comparable to other programmes that I have been involved or associated with directly or indirectly. The quality of work reviewed is at the level required of such programmes.

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 employ a good variety of assessment methods (often in combination) to provide a suitable challenge to the students. The types of assessment utilised include reports, essays, case studies, exams, in-class tests, group presentations, PDP, literature reviews, work-based projects and dissertations.

The design and structure of the assessment methods provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of theory, skills, and application of theory to examine different scenarios.

Most modules use multiple assessments to give students the opportunity to develop, apply further skills, and also measure their learning and gain from formative feedback which looks forward to the summative assessment.

The assessment strategies and methods are appropriate to the ILOs at both module and thereby programme level, as well as the programme's ethos and the students' academic development. Marking criteria are clearly broken down for students to understand what is expected of them, feedback is clear, detailed and structured accordingly, and moderation is evident through the moderation form.

Student performance is demonstrative of extremely effective and focused teaching, learning and assessment; this is reflected in the examples of high quality student work and grades in modules, and evidenced by the progression and classifications in the programme. Moreover, student feedback indicated excellent teaching and the enthusiasm of the delivery team.

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.*

There were plenty of opportunities for students to demonstrate progression and achievement. There is a very good range of formative and summative assessment methods used across the programme.

There was consistently strong performance across the grade bands with ample examples of good, steady and improving performance across the cohort. At the higher end, there were numerous examples of excellence and very good academic standards demonstrated by the students across the modules and thereby at programmes level.

As is the case with comparable programmes, there were students with a limited performed as well due to their ability or application in many or some modules. There may be mitigating circumstances and the programme/teaching team continue to invest great effort and time in trying to engage with and support these students.

The student performance compares favourably to students on similar courses at other institutions.

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 use of on-line submission and on-line marking across a number of modules was introduced last year and is very well utilised.

It appears to me that there have been enhancements with regard to the processes and practical usage of online assessment submission, grading and feedback to the betterment of assessment administration, moderation and the student experience.

I was advised that during the 2016/17 session, LLLC 1006 Studying in a Digital Age was delivered as a compulsory 5 credit module and LLLC 0171 Skills module was reduced to a 15 credit module, whereas in previous years Studying in a Digital Age was delivered as a supernumerary module. This change represents an enhancement as it specifically addresses academic skills and academic integrity.

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.

Students are introduced to research methods on both full-time and part-time programmes.

Full time students complete a dissertation in year four.

Part-time students undertake their own primary research in the form of a Work Based Research Project in year three and a Dissertation in year five. The Work-based project provides evidence of very good practical research; this was the first time that I have been able to review dissertations, and I was very pleased with the level of student work.

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

I agreed to be a mentor but have yet to be contacted regarding any questions or issues by/on behalf of the identified new external

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 material provided by the School and programme's academic and administrative team was suitable and allowed me to fulfil my role effectively.

Throughout the year there was regular dialogue with the programme leader, module leaders and administrative colleagues.

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.

Appropriate documentation and information has been made available – through email or via the virtual learning environment.

Many assessment briefs, exam papers and marking criteria were provided in advance of the module assessments; module guides were available through the VLE.

Almost all module spreadsheets were provided mid-module (where necessary) and at the end of the final assessment / before the board. The few that were not were made available in the module boxes.

Module boxes provided hard copy of all relevant module material such as module handbooks, assessment briefs, marking criteria, moderation forms, spreadsheets and student feedback.

Access to the VLE to review student work and tutor feedback has proven to be very convenient and highly effective and enhanced my ability to undertake my duties. Any issues with accessing work initially unavailable on my portal, for example modules or videos of group presentations, was quickly resolved through the help of administrative staff, the programme leader or module leaders. Staff were extremely prompt and helpful in addressing all my requirements.

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?

Where appropriate examination papers and assessments were provided for consideration and comment. The nature and level of the questions in the assessment briefs and exam papers were appropriately challenging to the level of study.

Arrangements were made to consider my comments.

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?

There was an abundance of assessed / examined work made available to enable me to have full confidence in my evaluation of the standard of student work.

All assignments submitted through the VLE were made available well in advance of the assessment board to give me plenty of time to review at my convenience. In-class assessments, exam scripts and dissertations were made available on site during my visit for the Board.

The online assignments and hard copy scripts were clearly annotated; detailed feedback provided on a grading sheet/sections as appropriate and where applicable (written assignments, presentations and dissertations). Feedback was detailed, constructive, and laid out in relation to stated expectations.

The information provided was appropriate, clear and very easy to follow.

Grading was fair and consistent; feedback is excellent - very clear, very detailed, well-structured and looks forward to help the students to improve and progress.

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

Yes - both the choice of subjects of the dissertation reviewed and the method and standards of assessment were 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 administrative arrangements were excellent and very clear for the whole process. The process for the classification of awards is chaired and administered in a highly professional manner.

The operation of the Board of Examination was excellent and the Board was conducted extremely, fairly and consistently. Academic, administrative and management staff work collaboratively and diligently to ensure that the enormous number of preparatory tasks have been undertaken thoroughly.

I was completely satisfied with the recommendations of the Board.

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

Appropriate procedures were in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence.

The board devoted sufficient time to discuss each case, showed detailed knowledge of the students, and operated in the interest of the students within the boundaries of the regulations.

Other comments

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

Quality assurance – there is evidence of good practice, i.e. clear evidence of moderation (form), exams are blind marked and presentations use panels/several members of staff. I commend the use of a panel at the presentations, both for quality assurance and to benefit/challenge the students.

The teaching staff deserve great praise for an excellent year; the feedback from students was generally excellent and in some cases exceptional as evidenced by the Module feedback in the fourteen module boxes reviewed.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report**Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)**

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Programme Manager, Business Management
Faculty / School of:	Lifelong Learning Centre
Address for communication:	University of Leeds LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

*If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.

Completing the School response

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at qat@leeds.ac.uk. External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

We were pleased to note your recognition of the positive impact on the student experience following our use of on-line submission and on-line marking. Your feedback is particularly helpful as it mirrors that received from our learners as part of their module evaluations. We plan to continue with on-line submission and marking into the 2017-18 year and beyond.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We welcomed your positive feedback regarding the positive impact on academic skills development brought about by the introduction of ODLM 1006 Studying in a Digital Age as a compulsory 5 credit module on the part time programme. This module will remain compulsory in 2017-18.

Response to Matters for Urgent Attention

If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:

There were no matters for urgent attention

Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Not applicable as this was not the first or the final year of appointment.

Standards**Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)**

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We note from your comments that you consider the overall programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be commensurate with level of the award and that you are satisfied that the structure and content of the programme is appropriate and at the right level.

We were pleased to note that you believe the structure of the programmes allows for the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the early stages followed by enhancement of these areas as the learner progresses.

Assessment and Feedback

Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Our part time and full time business management programmes use a diverse blend of assessments in order to allow all our learners ample opportunities to meet learning outcomes. We acknowledge your recognition of the benefits of this “variety of assessment” and also of the importance of formative feedback within the assessment process. Formative feedback is seen as an important part of the teaching and learning process for all our learners and the programme team will continue to provide this across all modules. For the 2017-18 session, we plan to make video recordings of all assessed student presentations available to you which will allow you more readily to make judgements about the standard of student work.

With reference to your point about excellent student academic performance and positive student module evaluations providing evidence of effective teaching, learning and assessment we are naturally very pleased to receive such feedback. Our approach to learning and teaching includes regular reflections on our professional practice which will continue to provide us with opportunities to further enhance the quality of the student experience and improve learning outcomes.

The Progression and Awards Process

Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Thank you for your positive feedback on both the operation and management of the Board of Examiners and also on the process by which Awards were made. The Board of Examiners represents the culmination of a huge amount of work performed by both academic and administrative teams within the centre and your comments reflect the significance of this aspect of our work within the annual academic cycle.

Other comments

Response to items included in the ‘Other Comments’ section of the report

We were pleased to note that you identified quality assurance as an area of good practice particularly with regard to the moderation processes in general and the use of staff panels to assess presentations.

Moderation is an area of our work that requires a large amount of work to be completed both diligently and also within tight time constraints and your positive feedback will be disseminated to the programme team.

16 October 2017

Dear

External Examiner's Report for 2016-17

I am writing to thank you for your work over the last year as External Examiner for our BSc Business Management and BSc Business Studies with Foundation Year. I know that and team are very appreciative of your observations on our work from an external perspective and welcome your assurance of the overall quality of this provision.

This year, the University has added further sections to the External Examiner's form to provide you with a structured response to your report from our programme team. Please find this completed form enclosed so that you can see the thoughts and plans that arise from our consideration of your comments.

With all good wishes,