

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016– 2017

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Arts, The Language Centre
Subject(s):	
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Academic English for Business and Management
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	

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

No

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?

Although this is not my first year of appointment it was the first time I had examined this course. It may have been helpful therefore to have seen previous EE reports (if available)

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

NA

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 is closely aligned with the content and assessment methods of the destination degree courses in the fields of Business and Management. The ILOs really reflect the specific academic and language skills students will need in their various Masters programmes. The aims of AEBM also show a good balance between the need to help students develop their English language and academic skills and the importance of introducing them to academic culture and typical learning environments in Leeds University. The ILOs cover a wide range of skills and are very clearly communicated to students through the Student Handbook.

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. The course compares very favourably with other such courses across the sector, which are designed to improve international students' academic English and allow them to progress to university degree courses with the requisite skills and confidence.

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 programme uses a variety of assessment methods which link closely to the learning outcomes. There is a good mix of formative and summative assessment and of assessment types (e.g. essay, presentation, seminar and timed writing). There is a bias in the weighting towards written assessment but this reflects the need for PG Business and Management students to be good academic writers.

Assessments appear carefully constructed to allow students to receive key input, reflect on this, carry out independent reading with the help of reading lists and receive formative feedback on drafts. All of this ensures that students learn from the assessment process itself. All assessments have clearly specified grading criteria which are available to the students via the VLE and carefully communicated to staff at induction and through standardisation meetings. The marking of the assessments I looked at was of a good standard and a fair reflection of students' ability to function effectively in a university environment. The scoring system was transparent and this together with feedback comments from the marker showed students which areas they might need to concentrate on in future assignments.

Feedback provided to students on their written work was generally high in quality. The tone of the feedback and the explicit guidance given made the feedback genuinely helpful. However, there was some variation in quantity and the level of detail.

I was very impressed by the quality of some of the assessment briefs. In particular, the brief for the Academic Writing Project was very clear and helpful. In contrast, the brief for the Presentation assessment was much less detailed.

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One area for slight concern is the 'double jeopardy' of being assessed on the same topic in the presentation and the essay particularly students have not received feedback on the essay at the time they give the presentation.

In general, student performance points to the high quality of the teaching and learning on the 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.*

Overall, it is clear that the students were able to demonstrate their progress in the key skills they will need on their various postgraduate courses. Assessment results indicated the overall strength of their cohorts although it was noticeable that performance in the academic writing exam was weaker than in the other assessment elements. One of the teaching team commented that this may have been due to the difficulty of the question and the short time available. However, I do strongly support the inclusion of at least one exam in pre-sessional assessment.

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

NA

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.

NA

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 course has been developed with a clear recognition of the need to align the content and assessment of a preessional course with the needs of a particular discipline. This is also very much in line with current thinking about how EAP instruction and support can be most effective.

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

NA

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 was invited to act as a mentor but have not yet been asked for advice or 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.

Yes

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 but it would be helpful to have these earlier to allow more time to consider and digest them. My meeting with the Programme Director was extremely 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?

No I was not provided with drafts of any exams or other assessments so was unable to comment on their appropriateness before they were administered.

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 but again more time would have allowed more detailed consideration.

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

NA

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. I particularly support the position that to progress from level 3 to 4 students must achieve a satisfactory overall grade and that there is no provision for 'passing with a warning'. Given that at level 4 students automatically progress to their degree courses it is particularly important that progression from level 3 is carefully scrutinised. I also like the provision of resit possibilities but it is unfortunate that so little time is available for students to prepare for these. However, I do appreciate that time constraints probably make this inevitable.

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 strongly support the suggestion made by the Programme Director that in the future Level 3 and 4 students should be taught separately.