External Examiner's report summary

School of Built Environment And Engineering

Postgraduate

- MSCPM Project Management(TP)
- MSSPM Strategic Project Management(TP)

Please indicate, below, whether you agree with the statements about the threshold standards of Leeds Beckett University's awards, student achievement and the conduct of the University's assessment processes, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements. Please also list any shortcomings and areas for commendation. You should expand on any issues you mention here in the main report. If any boxes are ticked "No" the Dean of School or nominee will be alerted and will oversee the response from the Course Director.

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Standards Set

	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/awards meet with the requirements of the relevant National Qualifications Statement's."	X	

If your answer is **'no',** please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

Student achievement

	Yes	No	N/A*
"In my view, students' who have been awarded qualifications have had the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar." *Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this statement, please note here:	X		

Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision
Students attainment were comparable to L7 of similar on campus (home) provisions at other UK HEIs that I am familiar with

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short:

External Examiner's report summary

Conduct of process

	Yes	No	
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are reliable, rigorous and fairly conducted."	X		

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

Actions from last year's report
(This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time)

N/A

Areas of good practice/commendation

Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment:

Students sitting at the top bands appeared to be able to evidence and demonstrate high quality and developed reading, scholastic quality lens and perspectives (of publishable standards), some very interesting lens and trends in project management and strategic project management, current teaching practice (module content, materials and resources) invite wide range of current debates and project management "semantics", some modules have comprehensive guidance, support and direction e.g., where students could seek further help and assistance from wider University support mechanisms, practical and vocational nature of this discipline was coming out from the definitive lessons plan (weekly lecture schedule), students body of work suggest they were supported well and extensively by the module leaders (of course every institution will have different ability learners), assessments range appropriately challenged and extended students ability and capacity to produce and demonstrate attainments at L7 with clear linking of project management and strategic project management theories and frameworks to practice, evidence of learning (from the body of work) which truly goes back to the work place

Main report

In this section you are asked to describe more fully how the University has or has not maintained threshold academic standards and the quality of the student experience in relation to the course(s) for which you are the external examiner, using as a reference the framework for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements / Qualification Characteristic Statements.

Please complete all sections of the form fully and where not applicable please state N/A. Where applicable please also complete the sections for any collaborative provision sampled.

If you are an external examiner for any of the University's Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes (HND/HNC level) provision, please also complete the section on page 9 sections l, m and n entitled "for External Examiners Associated with Pearson Licensed Centre Programmes."

Professional Body Requirements

	Yes	No	N/A*

External Examiner's report summary

"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met. *Not applicable if the course is not a professional body courseplease indicate here.	X		

If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.

(a) The operation and conduct of the Progression and Award Board (and/or Module Board meeting you may also have attended).

Due to Covid 19 Leeds Beckett University has invoked four different stages of the exam board leading to the Institutional level oversight and approval of decisions on behalf of Academic Board for the progression and award boards. I was involved and consulted in stage 1 with further involvement and consultation after stages 2 and 3 to confirm and approve the outcomes (including for any uplifting of marks/grades). I am confident due diligence and adequate scrutiny will be applied to all these 4 stages to ensure conduct per Leeds Beckett University's academic regs, assessment, progressions and award board policies (robust scrutiny and oversight management of the processes leading to stage 4), this is also comparable with other UK HEIs exceptional regulations and policies due to the current pandemic situation

(b) The action, if any was required, taken in response to your report of last year. (This will not be relevant if you are examining for the first time.)

(c) The overall performance of the students, in relation to that of comparable levels of work in other institutions.

Institutions tend to get different ability learners, students' performance generally suggest comparability in other UK HEIs of similar level provisions that I am familiar with

(d) The strengths and weaknesses of the students in general with respect to knowledge, conceptual grasp or application of skills.

Students at the top band marks/grades, as expected from their body of work suggest greater engagement with the programme/modules materials and resources, ability to undertake broader synergy with high quality peer reviewed and scholarly literature leading to scholastic outcome and value considering the vocational nature of the project management discipline

Students at the mid to low band of marks/grades may need further guidance and direction around on how to bring in or evidence high quality reading, peer reviewed and scholastic work, referencing/citation methods per Leeds Beckett University's convention, academic rigour and content expected at L7 (breadth, depth, synthesis, critique, evaluation and analysis)

forms of assessment.

Markers/Tutors generally have been consistent, some used the assessment rubric, marks/grades awarded appeared to be generally inline with Leed Beckett University's grade descriptors and students body of work, though there was some occasional leaning towards generous marking but marker's feedback/comments eventually justify and rationalise why these marks/grades, clear skimming through of students script/body of work by some tutors and markers with meaningful developmental feedback/comments from the start, mid and end (robust marking foot print for some modules)

(f) The curriculum, teaching or resourcing of the programme of study as indicated by the performance of the students in the assessment

Programme/modules materials and resources made available on the Leeds Beckett University's VLE, MyBeckett appeared to be resourceful generally with clear requirements and expectations of the assessments, comprehensive module and course handbooks/guides, linking to the library resources and databases including external peer reviewed materials, so overall plenty and comprehensive materials afforded to students, lecture materials equally well targeted to the vocational student body

(g) Comments on the use of My Beckett (Virtual Learning Environment) within the course (if applicable).

Easy to navigate and use, most of the EE moderation pack and front-line documentations were all made available in one place. Students and staffs should find this platform very easy to use, not complicated at all to use, very clear guidance and direction provided including where to seek relevant appropriate supprt

(h) Module content, consistency of modules and module assessment across the course and the achievement of learning outcomes. (You may be asked by your School to provide detailed comments on the modules that you examine.)

Some modules appeared to be shared between MSc Project Management and MSc Strategic Project Management (common course architecture), modules content across these two programmes afforded opportunity for student to demonstrate and evidence attainments including the assessment practice range. However, the programme/modules team may want to consider the distinctive unique feature/nature for both programmes to attract more prospective students with clear USPs with generalists but specialists and targeted focus to wide range of sectors, disciplines and stakeholders, with an aspiration of broader synergy of Project Management and Strategic Project Management (broader and wider "strategicness") approaches to wide range of domains

Please consider to bring in more commercial practice in these two programmes, increasingly learners need to have more constructive practice around "how to put them under technical, commercial and financial pressure" - commercial and technical integrity within the project management lens and insights, hence please also consider wide range of assessments practice, e.g., mock project management and commercial management practice, running case study, real project brief, specs with real client with established and agreed performance measures, KPIs, stage gated reviews/project reviews to afford learners more practice of practical nature and opportunity for further real "project managementness" development

Aspects around strategic project management need further enhancing e.g., portfolio management, strategic project management processes, techniques, toolkits such as project management office (PMO) of various kinds and range, appeared to be relatively thin throughout

(i) Areas of student/staff engagement in teaching and learning, scholarship, research or professional practice.

Please consider to bring in more global project management standards and body of knowledge e.g., PMI (Project Management Institute) foundational standards, practice guides and practice standards and frameworks, hence an opportunity for students and staffs to engage with broader synergy of current internationally/globally (widely) used Project Management, Programme Management and Portfolio Management Body of Knowledge

Building awareness or mock practice around how learners could achieve their potentially their first affiliation and/or professional membership/advanced standing from these two programmes with APM and/or PMI or other internationally/nationally recognised project management bodies

(j) The University welcomes external examiners' comments on its academic regulatory framework. Such comments may not have a direct bearing on standards set and achieved or the conduct of processes and so it may not be appropriate to include them elsewhere in this report or its summary. Please record any concerns or comments you may have here.

The exceptional regulations comments/feedback as noted in a.) above appeared to be not leading to any inflated grades/marks or generous academic regs and progression policies, the 4 stage process appeared to be robust and encouraging to still maintain academic standards and threshold with appropriate intervention and involvement by the External Examiners, i.e., the EEs are rightfully engaged and consulted at every step of the exam board process leading to the Stage 4's Institutional level oversight and approval of decisions on behalf of Academic Board, these stages were overall inline and comparable with sector practice triggered by the pandemic situation

(k) Collaborative Provision: please include here any comments you wish to make on elements of collaborative provision for which you have responsibility (in addition to those you may have indicated previously in this report).

The University/School could consider offering these two MSc Programmes to its current/prospective new collaborative partners, good programme which should reach out to wider students/stakeholders including for corporate engagement as KTP (further local industries collaboration), flexible MSc, WBL, WBDL, SDLA apprenticeship provision, broader synergy with other Leeds beckett University PG programmes such as MBA with Project Management and/or Strategic Project Management pathways, HE with local FEs at Leeds

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