External Examiner's report summary

Leeds Business School

Undergraduate

- BAHPR Public Relations(UG)
- BAPRJ Public Relations Journalism(UG)
- BPRBC Public Relations & Brand Comm(UG)

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
The exceptional Covid-19 regulations were particularly well thought through and were applied carefully and thoroughly to all cohorts for the award, progression and resit board profiles I was asked to consider.

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

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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)

Yes

Areas of good practice/commendation

Any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to learning, teaching and assessment:
The course teaching and administrative teams are to be commended for supporting students through this difficult year. The Covid-19 regulations were very supportive of students and were carefully and fairly applied.

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*
"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).

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This year the award, progression and resit boards were conducted asynchronously by email. I received profiles by email on 21st (PG) & 22nd (UG) July and on 23rd September (UG & PG) 2020. I also received the handbook to support external examiners in relation to the exceptional Covid-19 regultations. Where I had questions, these were answered thoroughly and efficiently by the course administrative team. This year I also examined profiles for MA International Communication, MA PR & Strategic Communication,and MSc Corporate Communications.

(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.

Students performed well in difficult circumstances at a level comparable with those at other institutions I am familiar with.

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

I did not examine student work and I am commenting on the profiles evidence from the board.

(e) The standards of the structure, organisation, design and marking of all examination papers and/or other forms of assessment.

I did not examine student work and I am commenting on the profiles evidence from the board.

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

I am kept up to date with the curriculum and any proposed modifications. The performance of the students supports my belief that these are strong programmes of study that are student-focused on both academic performance and future employability.

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

N/A

(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.)

I see module plans and proposed modifications and I am confident that these are carefully designed to support student achievement against learning outcomes.

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

Staff are focused on support for student learning and are appropriately engaged in research and/or professional practice.

(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.

I had one question on regs which was related to the application of 120 best average regulations to MA International Communication. This was resolved satisfactorily by the course administrator and, following internal consultation, a best 80 regulation was applied. I supported this approach, which resulted in an improved classification for one student. In relation to the extraordinary Covid-19 regs, I noted that these interacted with the weighted average policy which had the effect of two students with an incomplete L6 being awarded firsts whilst two students with a complete L6 and a first profile on a best 60 basis were awarded a 2:1 based on the weighted average calculation. The course team were clearly aware of how students with missing modules could have been expected to perform in any missing modules, however, and the regs were applied correctly, but the option for an either/or policy application would have benefited students here.

(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).

N/A