

School of Events, Tourism and Hospitality Management

Undergraduate

- BSTBM Travel Business Mangt (TU)
- ITOUR International Tourism Manag (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

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

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:

Outstanding staff/student engagement. This is evident in students being encouraged and supported to confidently research emerging/controversial tourism themes and topics.

Excellent links and engagement and active participation with established industry partners and professional body associations.

A culture of celebrating staff and student successes.

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 course please 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).

I attended the board s in February (in person) and July (virtually). The boards were again chaired very professionally and competently. In particular, the arrangements made to enable the June boards to take place given the extraordinary Covid-19 constraints were appropriate and meant the boards could be operate remotely. Boards were well attended and and efficiently administered. All module and student profile data was made available electronically in advance of the boards. This ensured ample opportunity to discuss progress and profiles where relevant. I would like to commend the DVC (Academic), Quality Assurance Service, academic faculty and support services teams for the clarity of communications outlining changes made as a result of Covid-19 and for their professionalism throughout this unprecedented year.

(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 particularly well across all levels of the programme which is testament to the efficiency to which the team were able to switch to remote learning and support. Changes to assessment as a result of covid-19 and the university-wide and course-specific actions introduced to mitigate the impact of any disruption to the students' studies were appropriate and approved in advance. These also maintained the academic standard and integrity of the programme. Students should be congratulated for their level of engagement during what must have been a stressful time.

Year 1 - 61% of the cohort were able to 'pass and proceed' with a further 36.7% having 'components pending' by way of reassessment. The level for of feedback provided should help these first year students to quickly get back on track.

Year 2 - 72.7% of the cohort were able to 'pass and proceed'. The increase in the number of students passing the year is in line with expectations and reflects a better grasp of the assessment requirements.

Overall there has been a marked increase in the number of first class degrees award to completing students. Notwithstanding the above comments about minor assessment changes and extension to submission deadlines in response to Covid-19, the increase in grades is a reflection of the incremental changes made throughout the programme, and also evidence that students assessed work was much more analytical, evaluative and reflective.

The higher number of first class degrees awarded on the 4yr route in particular also shows the benefits of students undertaking a placement year. They were able to relate and apply their workplace learning and experience effectively when completing assessments on their return. This is also consistent with placement students on other tourism degree programmes.

3yr route - 37% (10 students) were awarded a first class degree with a further 10 receiving a 2:1.

4yr route - a significant increase in the number of first class degrees awarded. 84% of students (16/19) were awarded a first class honours degree. The excellent performance of students reflects the significant improvements made to the course whilst maintaining academic standards.

Four student prizes were confirmed.

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

This year more than ever the students have demonstrated they are incredibly resilient by how they adapted quickly to the changes teaching, learning assessment as a result of the evolving covid-19 situation. Their performance has been commendable as evidenced by the grades confirmed at the award and progression boards.

Once again they were fully engaged and challenged in line with the programme aims to develop highly skilled, critically informed and dynamic graduates. This was clearly demonstrated on the Tourism Marketing Strategy module in particular where they were able to draw upon the coronavirus outbreak as a real time crisis and relate the knowledge and experience gained when completing the tourism recovery assessment. Likewise, when completing the Tourism Consultancy Ventures and Individual Project modules. The learning opportunities provided throughout the year enabled them to work independently and collectively in groups to collect, organise, synthesise and analyse information from a variety of sources and communicate their findings and results in a range of audience-relevant formats. They have also demonstrated that they are increasingly confident and reflective learners which will stand them in good stead as they embark on their tourism practitioner and professional careers paths. It is good to see this aspect of the course continue to be recognised by a number of professional tourism bodies when awarding student prizes.

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

The level 5 and 6 assessments were all appropriately designed in line with the current FHEQ outcomes and the revised (November 2019) QAA EHLS&T benchmark statements. Importantly many of the assessments were purposely contextualised around current developments and in the industry issues faced by tourism businesses such as the tourism crisis recovery assessment.

All assessments were reviewed and approved in advance of being issued to students. I was also provided with a rationale to support the Covid-19 revisions to assessment proposed by the course team in order to provide feedback.

As advised previously, the internal scrutiny procedures alongside external moderation ensures assessment validity and reliability, standards and 'fitness for purpose'. There is a good coherence across the assessment programme which is consistent with the published assessment strategy.

Marking and internal standardisation was fair and consistent with evidence provided to show transparency across the programme, and feedback/feedforward comments provided to students were in line with the

marks and grades awarded.

I would like to particularly thank the team for providing a good range supporting evidence and supplementary materials to enable me to effectively and efficiently moderate all assessed work. For example, the inclusion on My Beckett of field visit activities and photographs, field visit programme and the assessment support materials provided via Skype to help students during the enforced lockdown was particularly helpful.

All marks were confirmed.

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

The course team continue to utilise a diverse range of academic and industry-relevant resources to support learning and teaching on what is unquestionably a state-of-the-art curriculum. It is pleasing to see how enthusiastically tutors continue to embrace pedagogical developments whilst continuing to embed a problem-based and flipped classroom learning approach to support the development transferable and employability skills development. This will benefit students looking to progress onto a higher level course or in the workplace as reflected in the performance of returning placement students.

Industrial visits, guest speakers, residential programmes continue to be a strong feature of this programme.

It is also good to see tutors draw upon their own academic research and industry engagement project work to complement traditional teaching resources. There is increasing evidence of the students being encouraged to actively contribute as co-producers of what is now established as an outstanding tourism programme.

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

My Beckett has always been used extensively and very well to creatively support and enhance teaching, learning and assessment. This year in particular it was used effectively during the semester two lockdown period to ensure remote teaching and assessment could continue seamlessly. There were many examples provided to show how tutors were supporting students remotely from a wellbeing perspective.

As indicated above, My Beckett was also used to share the supplementary activities provided for students to assist with the external moderation process.

(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.)

Level 5 and 6 modules examined this year:

Semester 1 - Trends in Tourism; Tourism and the Media; Tourism Entrepreneurship; Destination

Management; Professional Solutions for Industry; Tourism and the Media.

Semester 2 - Tourism Marketing Strategy; Tourism Consultancy Ventures; Individual Project.

The indicative content delivered across each of the above modules demonstrably enabled students to achieve the intended learning outcomes via the relevant, approved mode of assessment. It's good to see the extent to which the deliver term continue to review and reflect upon the modules and where they best fit within the overall programme structure to support progression throughout years 1-3/4. There is coherence and constructive alignment with the approved aims and objectives set out in the programme specification.

In addition to providing feedback to module leaders electronically during the approval process and also in person or virtually when attending boards. For instance, discussions took place around the re-adjustment of module content to support student learning and the introduction of a new individual component topic on the Destination Management module, and how students are supported with the 'step up' challenges on the Tourism Entrepreneurship module.

Given the changes made in response to covid-19 closer scrutiny of the modules and assessment took place during semester 2 to ensure that the changes proposed did not materially impact on the learning outcomes.

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

This remains a real strength on the ITM programme. I can't recall another programme that I've managed or been involved with as an external examiner where the staff purposely draw upon their own published and ongoing research, industry and professional body links to enhance teaching and learning and student engagement.

Once again the excellent staff/student engagement is clearly evidence in the range of emerging tourism themes and contemporary/special interest topics featured in students work submitted for assessment. For example, on the TCV module: monetarising a sustainable tourism internet platform, and the use of plastic alternatives/plastic waster in self-catering accommodation; Tourism Marketing Strategy module: brand storytelling, Icelandic volcano eruption, Manchester arena bombing, climate change crisis in the Arctic; Individual Project module: role of events in historic houses, ethical implications of orphanage tourism. Encourage and students to have the confidence to undertake original/field-based and inter-disciplinary research on tourism themes such as these reflects very well on both staff and students.

I was unsurprised to see the ITM programme endorsed by the most recent 100% student satisfaction rating in the NSS and the staff helping the School to improve its research outputs and academic ranking.

(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 academic regulatory framework is very well understood and adhered to by the Programme/Module

leaders.

The regulatory changes around mitigation and non-submission were also well-referenced and applied in the July boards.

(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).

Not applicable.