

Leeds Law School

Undergraduate

- LLBFI Law with Finance(UG)
- LLBIB Law with Internatnl Business(UG)
- LLBMG Law with Management(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:

I was not able to attend in person due to the Covid pandemic. However, I informed the School that I was available via telephone for any queries. I am not aware of any matters that required intensive consideration. There is a history within the Law School at Leeds Beckett of thorough and effective consideration of student's grades and profiles including the borderlines. I cannot envisage that there was any variation to this approach even given the difficulties of communication.

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).

Please see comments above under 'Areas of Good Practice' above.

(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.

The overall performance is comparable with other institutions.

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

Staff remain aware of the problem of a small number of students regarding lack of engagement and the number of non-submissions, although this has been tempered somewhat as a result of Covid, with greater flexibility for agreed later submissions of assessments. This is a practical solution to an unprecedented situation.

Discussions of continued lack of engagement with the course and possibilities of automatic withdrawal is a matter that is considered across the sector and is an on-going focus for the team. Students who do engage with the course generally perform well. There were a number of well-earned firsts.

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

This is my second year of my oversight of the Dissertation module. The challenges of a large team for student supervision and marking is continuous. Following discussions with the Module Leader it is evident that a number of changes have been made which has improved aspects of the Dissertation Module specifically and the 'Law with' programmes programmes overall.

The Dissertation topics selected for study were wide-ranging, relevant and interesting with some modern view-points on legal principles, eg assisted dying, rap culture and the justice system. The team are to be commended in inspiring the students to research and investigate these novel legal and socio-legal areas. The work was marked thoroughly with useful commentary which would be of assistance to anyone moderating the work and also to the students for any future studies. There has been much progress on the approach to this Module and the Module Leader and team are to be congratulated.

However, I think it important to highlight a few additional points:

Assessment 1: Proposal/Literature Review

There needs to be more clarity for both students and the team as to whether the Proposal/Literature Review makes up part of the second assessment – the final Dissertation submitted, or is appended. I think

that it is logical that once graded, the Proposal/Literature Review should make up Chapter 1 of the Dissertation as it makes a more cohesive whole and the student gains an understanding of its' purpose, even though it has already been assessed. I have since been in communication with the Module Leader and this is a matter being discussed by the team.

According to the Module template, Assessment 1 of this Module would involve an Abstract of 4-600 words and Chapter 1 presumably the Literature Review/Proposal, some 1500-2000 words. Submission of a defined Abstract as part of the assessment was not consistent. The word count ranged from 977 to 2951 - both outside the parameters of the suggested limits and the normal +/- 10% of word counts before grade deduction. Whilst this is not extreme, the skills required to be demonstrated in this type of Module is to write within the parameters of these limits. This is something I believe that the team will look at for the future and be more demanding of the students on this point.

Assessment 2 - Dissertation

Additionally, in looking at the word count for the Dissertation, there is a variance in the sample provided, for example from 10995 to 13851. I would ask the team to consider requiring greater compliance to the word limits to ensure that a level playing field is demonstrated.

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

The programme(s) of study provide the students with wide experience and opportunity. The Law team are constantly striving at looking at ways to improve their programme of study which is to be commended. The Dissertation module has its own difficulties because of selection of the topic areas and the required staff expertise within the subject area. This has demonstrated much improvement this year. The Module Leader, I believe, is looking at ways to improve both the Dissertation Module and has planned some changes for the future delivery.

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

I understand that materials are available to all students on-line.
Grading of student work and commentary is also now electronic.

(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.)

My role is to examine the 'Law with' programmes as a whole rather than specific individual Modules and as such I consider the programmes with an overview. I also examine the Dissertation Module. There was a variety of assessment styles to provide students with opportunities to excel in different methods of assessment. I have provided the Dissertation Module leader and the Board with a full Module Report and had subsequent communication with the Module Leader. There is always work to be done to improve and both he and the team show enthusiasm in this area.

practice.

My comment from last year that the Dissertation style of supervision and assessment be linked to the postgraduate Dissertation modules and liaison with the Dissertation Module Leader to standardise both supervision and assessment stands as an ongoing comment.

(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.

Please see comments in other areas.

I had contact from the University prior to the Board and noted that I would be available either by Skype, Facetime or telephone on the day of the Board. I was not contacted and can only assume that no queries arose. I do understand that there was an external in contact with the Board throughout and that matters were thoroughly discussed at length.

I have also since received a full response from the Module Leader of the Dissertation which has been helpful.

(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