

## PG Dip Legal Practice 2017/18

### External Examiner's report summary

Please indicate in the relevant boxes 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.

Standards set		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the threshold academic standards set for the modules/awards are appropriate."	✓*	
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.		
*They have been approved as such by the regulator of the solicitors' profession		

Student achievement			
	Yes	No	N/A *
"In my view, students' achievement is comparable with similar course(s) or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar."	<b>Broadly, but see below*</b>		
Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision.			
* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this please indicate here.			
If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.			
<p>*Incremental changes to assessments I have reviewed over the four years that I have been External Examiner – and recent changes to assessments at my own institution - have resulted in appreciable convergence of assessment standards and thus greater comparability of students' achievement with the same course at other UK institutions with which I am familiar. I have suggested ways to ensure further convergence and thus full comparability of student achievement pending introduction of the anticipated Single Qualifying Examination for the solicitor profession, but it is for the staff team to decide whether to adopt these.</p>			

Conduct of processes		
	Yes	No
"In my view, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are rigorous and fairly conducted."	✓	
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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**Areas of good practice**

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

I have not been made aware of any innovations in relation to learning, teaching and assessment this year. However, I am pleased to note that, responding to a concern I expressed last year, where assessments are to be submitted online, this is now achieved anonymously.

## 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			
"In my view, the professional body requirements for this course have been met.  <i>*Not applicable if the course is not a professional body course please indicate here.</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A *</b>
	<b>√*</b>		
<p>*As stated in my three previous reports, given the regulatory requirement for LPC providers to set assessments that are "<i>primarily transactional in nature</i>" (SRA LPC Information Pack, Assessments and Awards, 2014), I believe that <i>application</i> of the law should be required more consistently in assessment questions. I am pleased to note that the assessments I have been asked to review continue to move in this direction.</p> <p>In addition to my external examiner responsibilities for specific modules, I am also responsible for assuring arrangements for record keeping of student achievement and issue of student transcripts. I am pleased to report that, based on information provided to me, these arrangements are appropriate.</p>			

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

(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.)
<p>I received a written response to the effect that my comments were considered by the LPC staff team at their Development Day but with the conclusion being reached that no action was required.</p> <p>I have nonetheless again suggested some specific issues that the team might consider at their next Development Day eg mark allocation to MCQs (this currently being related to their design rather than to their inherent level of challenge), and the wording of assessment questions to reflect Level 7. I have also shown staff examples of the assessments used at my own institution, to further illustrate comments I have made in relation to comparability of assessment standards/Level 7/and so on.</p>

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

An expected spread of attainment within the Leeds Beckett cohort is seen on the modules for which I am external examiner. However, as a result of some continuing variation in approach to assessment (alluded to in my comments in the Summary above), I cannot make a direct comparison with the performance of students at my own institution.

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

The assessments show an expected spread of student attainment with regards to both knowledge and skills.

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

Subject to comments made above in relation to comparability of standards with other providers, I approve these items.

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

The expected spread of attainment shown by students' assessment performance suggests that the teaching and resourcing of the course is effective.

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

I have no information about this.

**(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.)**

Based on my review of the modules for which I am responsible, I believe the level of module content and assessment to be consistent across the course; and that the learning outcomes for the modules have been met.

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

I have not been advised of any.

**(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.**

n/a

**(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

**External Examiners' Report Checklist**

**Please comment for all boxes**

<b>Course Materials</b>				
Did you receive?		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	Course Handbook(s)?	√		
b.	Academic Regulations including any Professional Statutory Body requirements where appropriate (these may be included the Course Handbook)?		√	
c.	Module specifications (these may be in the Course Handbook)?	√		
d.	Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	√		

<b>Draft examination papers</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft papers?	√		
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?			
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?  <b>*I have raised again a concern about the design of the questions – in one module in particular - not always being appropriate to Level 7, these often directing candidates to provide very specific knowledge in a way more appropriate to Level 6. I have suggested how the questions could be simply amended to a Level 7 standard.</b>	√*		
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			

<b>Draft coursework</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a.	(i) Did you receive all the draft coursework?			√
	(ii) If not, was this at your request?			
b.	(i) Was the nature and level of the coursework appropriate?			
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			

Marking Examination Scripts				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	(i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?	√		
	(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?			
<p><b>Recommended sample sizes at Leeds Beckett University are as follows:</b></p> <p><b>a) Samples should be determined by a square root of cohort size, no smaller than 6, no larger than 15. However it should be borne in mind that not all work is assessed in a way that makes a square root sample possible and allowance should be made. For example in subjects such as the performing arts where there may be a requirement for an external to come and view a performance instead, or to visit the exhibition of art work.</b></p> <p><b>b) Samples to include all classification categories, and it is helpful to concentrate around the boundaries to include some fails.</b></p> <p><b>c) Samples to consist of internally moderated work, clearly evidencing the moderation process.</b></p>				
b.	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	√		
c.	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	√		

Dissertations/project reports				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?			√
b.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?			√

Coursework/continuously assessed work				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment from both home and (if appropriate) collaborative partner students?			√
b.	Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?			√

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?			√

Module Board/Progression and Award Boards				
		Yes	No	N/A
a.	Were you able to attend the meetings?*One, on 5 July 2018.	√*		
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?	√		
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Module Board/Progression and Award Boards?	√		