

## LLB (Hons) Law 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."	✓	
<i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i>		
<p>In my last report I raised questions of the awarding of both Certificate and Diploma Awards on the basis of firstly procedural alignment in the current regulations, secondly failed modules and compensation or condonation, and lastly compounded failed modules that had been compensated or condoned.</p> <p>I understand that the Regulations Review Group are considering these issues and in the first place have suggested a review of guidance for greater clarity of approach. Secondly, the wider themes of assessment are being reviewed in the University and the incremental or compounded impact of compensation at each level will be considered further and reported on next Spring.</p>		

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."	✓		
Please provide any further comment on the comparability of collaborative provision.			
<i>* Not applicable – if you are a practitioner and are not in a position to assess this please indicate here.</i>			
<i>If your answer is 'no', please provide a brief statement (bullet points) of the respect(s) in which they fall short.</i>			

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.

Please see end section on 'Support for Externals'.

On a similar point, I was surprised to see, that the regulations indicated consideration of cohort marks as a whole and any suggestion of remedies was in the remit of the Module rather than the Award board. The latter is the only forum which by its nature considers an overview of both programme and student profiles in its entirety and is required to comment on overall programme cohesion. It is usually here that decisions of sub-boards are affirmed. I recommend these guidelines are revised accordingly to allow consideration of the same at Award Boards.

**Areas of good practice**

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

## 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>
	✓		
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 was particularly impressed by the conduct of staff at both the Progression and Award Boards. I have rarely seen capacity for the depth of discussion and reflection apparent over issues of quality, in this case substantially higher marks appearing in one particular module as an exception to the normal Award profile. I would like to thank the Chair in particular and Programme Leaders for such openness, diligence and objectivity in considering the outcomes.

**(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.)**

Data I had requested in my previous report was made available at this year's Award Board. My thanks go to the administrative staff for their extra work.

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

The overall performance of the students is broadly comparable to other institutions I am familiar with.

The introduction of the SQE will pose a challenge in the coming years with respect to both knowledge and application of skills. I am aware that the Law School is very conscious of this. With this mind, there has been a greater introduction of practical assessments with commensurately higher grades both within existing 'academic' modules and those that are specifically tailored to practical skills development.

At this year's exam board, there was a much higher comparative grading of practical skills in modules such as Civil Litigation with 67% of students taking the module achieving firsts, and though not as marked, but comparatively high with between 38% and 48%, achieving 2:1 band results in EU, International Human Rights, Mental Health and Media and Entertainment Law.

This will be an area to consider further at next year's board and I would request some trending data is made available for discussion.

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

Please see general comments under (e).

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

All examination and assessment papers that I have seen are marked professionally and diligently. At times there is a need to ensure quality and consistency of feedback across all modules and students within a module regardless of grading, which I have observed can be sparse at times or difficult to apply and interpret for a student to improve their work.

Equally, I have seen some very good examples of wider assessment types, such as those used in Medical Law.

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

Please see (e). I am conscious that there is a heavy burden on administrative staff and should funding be available, this may be an area to support further.

**(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.)**

On the whole, the structure of modules, their consistency across levels and cohesion within the programme is very good. Please also see my comments on assessment types under (e).

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

I should comment that I am impressed by the quality of work, commitment and application of what are clearly very hard working, engaged and caring staff. There was a level of mutual support and cohesion within the law school that does not exist to the same level in other law schools, and given the evidently very busy year, staff at the Law School should be commended, as should the Law School as a whole.

**(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.**

**(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**

Course Materials				
Did you receive?		Yes	No	N/A
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?	✓		

Draft examination papers				
		Yes	No	N/A
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?	✓		
	(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
c.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	✓		

Draft coursework				
		Yes	No	N/A
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?	✓		
b.	Were the meetings conducted to your satisfaction?	✓		
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Module Board/Progression and Award Boards?	✓		