

Arab Open University

Summary of External Examiners Reports

Academic Year: _____2024/2025_____

Semester: _____Summer_____

Programme: _____Business Studies_____

Tracks: Accounting, Economics, Finance, HRM, management, marketing, systems

Number of Modules Examined by the External Examiners: 35

1. Chief External Examiners response and Comments:

Please confirm that the assessment and standards set for the programme are consistent and appropriate, and that the processes for assessment and determination of awards are fair, reliable across the provision.

The Chief External Examiner confirms that the assessment standards set for the programme are appropriate, consistent, and aligned with University requirements. Assessments across the reviewed modules were internally moderated, supported by clear assessment criteria and detailed marking schemes, and marks were awarded that were fair and consistent across branches.

The processes for assessment, moderation, and determination of awards were described as transparent, reliable, and well-structured, with Exam Board and CAC meetings operating effectively and ensuring fairness across the provision

Please confirm that sufficient information and evidence of professional work and students' assessment were -received by the programmes' external examiners to enable them to fulfill their role.

The Chief External Examiner confirms that all required samples and assessment materials were shared electronically, and that the materials provided were suitable, relevant, and sufficient to enable the External Examiner to fully carry out

their role.

There were no concerns raised regarding access to materials, briefing, or evidence required for informed academic judgment

Commendations:

- Effective use of real-life and business case studies, supporting the application of theory to practice.
- Clear, well-designed assessments aligned with learning outcomes and supported by transparent marking schemes.
- Strong internal moderation processes, ensuring fairness and consistency across branches.
- Noticeable improvements in teaching quality, reflecting responsiveness to previous External Examiner feedback.
- Positive initiatives enhancing student engagement, including lab sessions, presentations, webinars, workshops, and training activities.
- High level of leadership support, coordination, and commitment from AOU and the Deanship

Suggestions for Enhancement

- Encourage students to develop stronger critical reflection, analytical depth, and academic writing skills.
- Expand curriculum content related to Artificial Intelligence and Business Intelligence.
- Introduce a Research Methods course to strengthen analytical and research competencies.

- Review the balance between lecture and lab hours to further enhance practical skills.
- Continue expanding postgraduate programmes and online delivery, with greater integration of AI-supported teaching approaches

2. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: Prof. Javed Siddiqui

Examined Modules: ACC300, ACC302, B291, B292, B294, B326, B392, BB293

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Accounting modules are satisfactory and appropriate for the award, and that they compare well with similar programmes at other institutions. The standards align with expected subject benchmarks and qualification frameworks

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance is reported to be comparable with peers on similar Accounting programmes elsewhere. Overall performance is satisfactory, with evidence that some students are producing high-quality work in line with sector expectations

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

The quality of students' work is described as generally satisfactory, demonstrating appropriate levels of subject knowledge and skills. Assessment evidence indicates

that learning outcomes are being achieved, with a number of students showing strong academic capability and sound understanding of Accounting concepts

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students demonstrate strong quantitative skills, which is consistent with expectations in Accounting disciplines. However, some students experience difficulty with qualitative analysis, particularly in questions requiring critical discussion and interpretive reasoning rather than numerical problem-solving

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

The External Examiner confirms that the design and structure of assessments are satisfactory, appropriately aligned with stated learning objectives and intended learning outcomes. Assessment methods are suitable for the discipline, and marking schemes are clearly applied to support fair evaluation

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

There is satisfactory evidence of consistency in marking and grading, with markers applying the grading criteria reliably across assessments. The External Examiner notes improvements in the quality of feedback compared to previous years, indicating enhanced assessment practice and quality assurance

3. External Examiner Name: Dr. Ourania Dimitraki

Examined Modules: DD209A, DD209B, DD309A, DD309B, ECO340

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Economics modules are appropriate for the award and aligned with national qualification frameworks and relevant subject benchmarks. Programme specifications and intended learning outcomes are clear, coherent, and set at an appropriate academic level. Overall standards are consistent with those of similar programmes at other higher education institutions

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance is reported to be comparable with peers on similar programmes elsewhere. The External Examiner notes that students' achievement falls within the expected norms for the award level, with clear evidence of progression and improvement compared to previous semesters

c. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

The quality of students' work demonstrates good subject-specific knowledge and skills, with evidence of critical thinking, originality, and depth of understanding. Students are able to apply theory to practice and show engagement with core disciplinary concepts. Learning outcomes are being appropriately achieved across

the cohort, supported by coherent assessment design and effective teaching practices

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include very good subject knowledge, effective independent research skills, analytical capability, and problem-solving ability. Many students demonstrate a strong capacity to apply theoretical concepts to practical and policy-related contexts.

Weaknesses include challenges for some students in synthesising complex material, maintaining consistency in academic writing, and integrating critical perspectives. A minority of students also show limitations in quantitative or technical skills

e. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

Assessments are described as well-designed, varied in format, and effective in allowing students to demonstrate a range of academic and transferable skills. They are clearly aligned with programme learning outcomes and provide a good balance between formative and summative assessment. The use of assessment rubrics is highlighted as a positive practice that supports clarity, transparency, and student understanding

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Marking and grading practices are confirmed to be fair, reliable, and consistently applied. Robust moderation procedures are in place, including the use of clear marking criteria and evidence of double-marking where required. Examination Boards operate professionally and transparently, ensuring equitable consideration of student performance and reinforcing confidence in the integrity of academic standards across the provision

4. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: [Prof. Alija Avdukic](#)

Examined Modules: [FIN240](#), [FIN340](#), [FIN341](#), [FIN342](#)

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Finance modules are fully appropriate for the award and consistent with subject benchmarks, qualifications frameworks, and programme specifications. The standards are comparable with sector norms and clearly meet expectations for awards at the relevant academic level.

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance in Finance is reported to be very strong in comparison with peers on similar programmes elsewhere. The quality of achievement compares very favourably with sector expectations, indicating a robust academic framework and effective programme delivery.

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

The quality of students' work is described as consistently high, demonstrating strong general and subject-specific knowledge and skills. Students show good mastery of Finance concepts, and learning outcomes are being effectively achieved, reflecting the strength of teaching, curriculum design, and assessment practices

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include strong overall performance, particularly among high-achieving students, and solid understanding of core Finance concepts. **Weaknesses** include limited depth and critical engagement in some student responses. In addition, weaker English language proficiency for a minority of students affects comprehension and can lead to incomplete or off-topic answers.

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

Assessments are described as well-designed and clearly structured, effectively evaluating student learning. They are appropriately aligned with the programme's stated objectives and intended learning outcomes, ensuring coherence between teaching, learning, and assessment methods

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Marking and grading practices are confirmed to be fair, consistent, and reliably applied, particularly across Finance modules. Grading criteria are clearly used, supporting equitable and transparent evaluation of student performance and reinforcing confidence in academic standards

5. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: Dr Desireé Cranfield

Examined Modules: B628, BUS628, HRM 205, HRM206, HRM210, HRM215, HRM320, HRM330

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the HRM modules are appropriate for the level of qualification and consistent with relevant subject benchmarks and programme specifications. Overall, academic standards are being appropriately upheld across the provision, with confidence expressed in the integrity of assessment and award decisions

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance is reported to be comparable with peers on similar HRM programmes at other higher education institutions. The standard of student achievement aligns with sector expectations for the award level

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

The quality of students' work demonstrates good general and subject-specific knowledge, with evidence of engagement with core HRM concepts and the ability to

apply theory in context. Learning outcomes are being effectively achieved, supported by coherent assessment design and constructive formative feedback, as reflected in improvements in academic writing and referencing

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include a sound understanding of HRM concepts, improved academic referencing practices, and growing ability to contextualise knowledge using real-world examples.

Areas for improvement include the need for stronger **critical analysis**, with some student responses remaining descriptive rather than analytical. Continued development in the use of **credible academic sources** is also required to strengthen argumentation and academic depth

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

Assessments have been reviewed positively, with increased use of case studies and applied tasks to support authentic assessment and mitigate inappropriate AI use. Assessments are aligned with learning outcomes, though further enhancement is recommended through more consistent use of assessment rubrics and clearer alignment of exam questions with Bloom's Taxonomy and mark allocation

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner confirms that marking schemes and grading criteria have been applied consistently across the reviewed samples. Assessment and moderation processes are described as fair, reliable, and transparent, supported by effective administrative coordination and quality assurance practices

6. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: [Prof. Nehal Mahtab](#)

Examined Modules: [B207A](#), [B207B](#), [BUS310](#)

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Management modules are appropriate and consistent across the programme. Assessments are effectively aligned with intended learning outcomes, content, and objectives, ensuring a fair and coherent evaluation of student achievement at the appropriate level of study

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance is reported to be on par with peers in comparable programmes. The reviewed work demonstrates standards of achievement consistent with sector expectations for Business and Management education

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

The quality of students' work reflects sound subject knowledge and clear understanding of Management concepts. Students are able to apply learning to practical and real-world contexts, indicating that learning outcomes are being effectively achieved. Ongoing enhancement focuses on strengthening students' critical writing and theoretical grounding

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include strong performance among students who engage consistently with the subject matter, effective application of knowledge, and readiness for practical and professional contexts. Areas for improvement relate primarily to the further development of critical writing and analytical depth, which is being addressed through continued student support and enhancement initiatives

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

Assessments are described as well-structured and practice-oriented, with a strong emphasis on real-world application and experiential learning. They are clearly aligned with programme objectives and learning outcomes, effectively preparing students for internships and future employment. Assessment design supports engagement, skill development, and applied learning

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Marking and grading practices are confirmed to be consistent with published marking schemes, supported by clear evidence of internal moderation. Feedback is constructive and aligned with assessment criteria, with a recommendation to adopt a more systematic feedforward approach to further enhance student development. Overall, assessment and award processes are fair, reliable, and transparent across the provision

7. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: [Dr. Raye Ng](#)

Examined Modules: [B325](#), [B205A](#), [B205B](#), [B629](#)

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Marketing, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship modules are appropriate for the subject area and level of study, and are comparable with standards applied in UK Higher Education Institutions. Assessment objectives and learning outcomes align with relevant subject benchmarks and are suitable for the award level

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance is reported to be on par with students on comparable programmes at other UK higher education institutions. The range of scripts reviewed demonstrates achievement levels consistent with sector expectations, with evidence of improvement over time, although further development in analytical depth is encouraged

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

Students' work demonstrates appropriate subject knowledge and skills, with many students able to respond directly to assessment questions and apply relevant concepts. Learning outcomes are being generally achieved, though the External Examiner notes that greater depth of analysis, reflection, and use of academic sources would further enhance the quality of student outputs across all campuses

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include the ability of stronger students to engage critically with assessment questions and demonstrate analytical thinking. Areas for improvement include inconsistent depth of analysis, limited critical reflection in some coursework, and weaknesses in academic referencing. Language proficiency challenges were also noted for some students, suggesting a need for additional language and academic skills support

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

The design and structure of assessments are described as **robust and fair**, with detailed and comprehensive marking criteria. Assessment objectives align with learning outcomes and subject benchmarks. The embedding of marking rubrics across modules is commended; however, stronger alignment between **feedback and marking criteria** is recommended to support student development and ensure transparency and consistency across branches

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

There is clear evidence that marking schemes and grading criteria are being applied, supported by cross-branch marking and standardisation practices. While marking is generally consistent, the External Examiner recommends ensuring greater consistency in the depth and quality of marking and feedback across all campuses to further strengthen fairness and reliability

8. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: [Dr Jaafar El-Murad](#)

Examined Modules: [B327](#), [B324](#), [MKT331](#), [MKT332](#)

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards set for the Marketing modules are appropriate for the award and aligned with relevant subject benchmarks and programme specifications. Overall standards are maintained at an acceptable level, with assessment expectations comparable to those of similar programmes

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

Student performance shows a wide range of attainment. At the upper end, several students produced excellent work comparable with peers on similar programmes elsewhere. However, the lower end of the performance spectrum includes some very weak work, indicating variability in achievement across the cohort.

C. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes

Students demonstrate a broad range of knowledge and skills. Stronger students show a solid grasp of course material, clear achievement of learning outcomes, critical thinking ability, and effective written communication. In contrast, weaker students sometimes fail to address assessment questions adequately, limiting their achievement of learning outcomes

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Strengths include strong subject knowledge, critical thinking, and clear written expression among high-performing students.

Areas for improvement relate to inconsistent performance across the cohort, with some students demonstrating limited engagement with questions and weaker academic writing. While initiatives to support weaker students are commended, the External Examiner notes that a more rigorous approach to admission and progression may warrant consideration

E. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and marking schemes)

Assessment design and structure are described as **generally good**, with GCCs setting interesting questions and providing detailed model answers to support marking. Assessments are broadly aligned with learning outcomes, although the External Examiner recommends the **systematic submission of ILO matrices** with draft assessments to ensure full coverage of intended learning outcomes

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Marking is described as mostly appropriate and consistent, with excellent feedback provided in many cases. However, concerns remain regarding inappropriately high marking in some instances, particularly where marks awarded do not align with the published grading criteria. The External Examiner emphasises the importance of consistent application of assessment standards and commends the Deanship and GCCs for taking prompt corrective action when inconsistencies are identified.