Text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Arab Open University**

**Summary of External Examiners Reports**

**Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_\_2024/2025\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Semester: \_\_\_\_\_Fall\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Programme: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_BA (Hons) Business Studies and MBA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Tracks: Accounting, Economics, Finance, HRM, Management, Marketing, Systems, MIS, MBA (finance , HRM)**

**No of External Examiners of the Programme: 10**

**No of Externally Examined Courses\_\_\_62\_\_\_\_\_**

1. **Chief External Examiners response and Comments:**

**Mahmoud Abdelrahman: SYS210, SYS280, SYS380, MIS300, MIS200, MIS331, MIS201**

|  |
| --- |
| **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.** |
| Dr. Mahmoud Abdelrahman (CEE) confirmed that the assessment and standards set for the programme are consistent and appropriate. Assessment procedures are clearly aligned with the University’s requirements, with detailed marking schemes, transparent criteria, and effective internal moderation across all branches. The processes for determining awards are fair, reliable, and transparent, ensuring consistency and integrity in evaluating student performance. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Please confirm that sufficient information and evidence of professional work and students’ assessment were -received by the programmes’ external examiners to enable them to t fulfill their role.** |
| A full range of samples was provided electronically, and the materials were appropriate and relevant. Sufficient evidence was received, including course materials, assessment briefs, student submissions, and marking schemes, enabling the external examiner to effectively fulfil his role and conduct a thorough evaluation. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Commendations:** |
| * Effective use of diverse and practical business case studies across all reviewed modules, enhancing the relevance of theoretical concepts to real-life scenarios. * Comprehensive and transparent assessment criteria with detailed marking schemes that support consistency across branches. * Strong commitment from tutors to implement past recommendations, improving overall learning quality and responsiveness to feedback. * Positive student engagement facilitated by a variety of digital tools, resources, and meaningful pedagogic practices. * Exceptional support and leadership from AOU administration and faculty, especially in exam board organization, course moderation, and teaching delivery. * Use of presentations in assessments to ensure student work authenticity and reduce over-reliance on AI-generated content. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Suggestions for Enhancement** |
| * Students should be encouraged to strengthen their **critical reflections, academic argumentation**, and application of theories or models in written assessments. * Improve **academic writing skills**, particularly for underperforming students, by offering targeted workshops and structured feedback. * Provide **more comments on exam scripts**, especially for failed students, to help them understand areas for improvement. * Ensure that **all assessment materials are submitted at least two weeks** prior to review to allow thorough examination by external examiners. * Standardise assessment document sharing by using centralised **online folders** instead of large email attachments to streamline access. * Continue improving the clarity and alignment of **rubrics with learning outcomes**, and provide more **detailed feedback** on student submissions. |

1. **Extracts from External Examiners report form**

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Nehal Mahtab**

**Examined Modules: B207A , B207B , BUS310**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards were confirmed to be appropriate and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, learning objectives, and subject benchmarks. Assessments ensured fair and consistent evaluation of students’ knowledge and understanding. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance was comparable to peers enrolled in similar programmes in other higher education institutions. Students demonstrated clear knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, with some room for growth in critical thinking. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| The quality of student work was generally strong, reflecting adequate understanding of theoretical concepts and practical application. Students effectively met the intended learning outcomes, particularly in practice-oriented assessments. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students who engaged well with the material and demonstrated critical analysis performed strongly. * **Weaknesses**: Some students failed to answer or analyze the questions appropriately, leading to lower grades. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| The assessments were well-structured and practical in nature. They effectively challenged students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, supporting career readiness and internships. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was consistent and aligned with the provided marking scheme. There was evidence of internal moderation. Dr. Mahtab suggested the addition of **feed-forward** comments to improve student development across performance ranges. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Raye Ng**

**Examined Modules: B205A , B205B , B629 , BUS629, B325, B329**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate for the level of the award. However, the examiner recommended enhancing the depth of **critical analysis** across all assessments to strengthen academic rigor. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is broadly comparable with peers in similar programmes at other institutions. However, exams tend to remain **traditional** in format, limiting the scope for testing advanced analytical skills. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| Student work demonstrated appropriate achievement of intended learning outcomes. However, there is a need to improve **assessment literacy** and **critical engagement**, particularly through more innovative and authentic assessments. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students are highly motivated and come from diverse backgrounds, showing strong aspirations toward UK higher education standards. * **Weaknesses**: Many students lack sufficient depth in **critical thinking** and **assessment literacy**. The examiner emphasized the need for students to embrace **more innovative and analytical approaches**. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessments are appropriate but could be improved by:   * Including **marking rubrics** to clarify expectations. * Diversifying assessment types to promote higher-order thinking. * Encouraging application beyond definitions through **critical analysis**. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking has been applied consistently. However, the report recommended enhancing transparency and alignment by providing clear **rubrics and marking criteria** across all modules and branches. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Jaafar El-Murad**

**Examined Modules: MKT331 , MKT332, B324, B327, B206**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are generally appropriate and in line with programme learning outcomes. However, there are concerns about inconsistencies in marking practices and the application of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which require more systematic attention. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Top-performing students are on par with peers in similar programmes elsewhere. However, performance at the lower end of the spectrum is poor, with some students failing to engage with the material or the assessment tasks. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| High-achieving students demonstrated solid grasp of the content and achieved the learning outcomes effectively. Weaker students showed limited understanding, with minimal application of concepts, and in some cases, failed to address the question properly. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Strong students displayed mastery of course material and clear attainment of outcomes. * **Weaknesses**: Some students showed a lack of engagement with course content and assignments. Poor performance was linked to inadequate preparation and comprehension. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessment design is generally good and aligned with learning objectives. However, the examiner recommended:   * More emphasis on **application of theory and models**, rather than repetition. * Clarifying which Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are being tested, as this linkage appears inconsistent across modules. * Consistency in what is submitted across branches (e.g., question papers, marking guides). |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Concerns were raised regarding **inconsistently high marking**, especially by a (possibly new) tutor in one branch. The report noted:   * Several instances of inflated grades (e.g., 90–100% range) inappropriately awarded. * The need to strengthen **post-marking moderation**, particularly by BCCs and GCCs, to ensure consistency and reliability in grade allocation. |

**External Examiner Name: Prof. Javed Siddiqui**

**Examined Modules: ACC302, B291, BB293, B292, B294, B392, ACC300, B326,B391**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards set for the Accounting modules are appropriate and in line with sector expectations. The assessments are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes and reflect the level expected of undergraduate business programmes. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is generally comparable to that of peers in equivalent programmes at other UK institutions. Students demonstrated a good grasp of technical accounting content, with a range of performance across branches. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| The quality of students’ work varied, but in general, they showed satisfactory knowledge and ability to meet module outcomes. Stronger students performed well in applying theoretical frameworks to practical accounting contexts, though qualitative reasoning remained an area for improvement. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students excelled in quantitative and computational tasks, such as solving financial problems and applying formulas accurately. * **Weaknesses**: Many students showed weak **qualitative analysis** skills, particularly in interpreting accounting information, discussing implications, or engaging critically with content. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessment design was consistent with module aims and involved a mix of theoretical and practical tasks. The examiner emphasized that assessments appropriately tested a range of skills, including problem-solving and applied knowledge. Suggestions were made to enhance clarity in some exam questions. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was applied fairly and consistently, with appropriate use of marking schemes and internal moderation. The quality of feedback improved compared to previous years, contributing to more transparent and developmental evaluation of student work. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Alija Avdukic**

**Examined Modules: FIN240, FIN241, FIN340, FIN341, FIN342, FIN242**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate and align with programme specifications and qualification frameworks. The learning objectives and assessment design reflect the level of the award and provide a sound basis for evaluating financial knowledge and skills. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Students’ performance is **consistent with comparable finance programmes** offered at UK higher education institutions. The assessment results indicate that students are achieving the expected outcomes, especially in technical areas of finance. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| Student work demonstrated a good understanding of core financial concepts, particularly in calculation-based questions. The achievement of learning outcomes was generally sound, with students applying theoretical frameworks to financial decision-making scenarios. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students were capable in technical areas such as quantitative analysis, financial modeling, and numerical problem-solving. * **Weaknesses**: Some students lacked depth in **qualitative and analytical reasoning**, especially when discussing financial implications or interpreting results. Language proficiency appeared to be a limiting factor for some. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessments were well-designed, combining both conceptual and applied components. The methods used were appropriate for finance modules, offering a balance between theoretical evaluation and practical skill testing. The examiner noted that assessment design was comprehensive and reflective of real-world financial scenarios. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking and grading were applied fairly and consistently across branches. The external examiner found evidence of thorough moderation and remarked positively on the transparency and reliability of grading processes. The marking criteria were clearly aligned with the expected standards. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Desireé Cranfield**

**Examined Modules: B628, BUS628,HRM205, HRM215, HRM320, HRM330**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate and align well with the qualification level. The module objectives and benchmarks are clearly defined, and the standards set are consistent with expectations for an undergraduate HRM pathway. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is generally comparable to peers in similar programmes across the sector. There was a good range of outcomes, indicating a fair reflection of student ability and alignment with external standards. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| Student work met expectations, with varying levels of quality across sites. High-performing students showed evidence of practical application and theoretical understanding. The work demonstrated that most students successfully achieved the learning outcomes. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Resilience and commitment were evident, particularly from students studying under challenging conditions (e.g., Lebanon). Students showed improvement in outcomes in several modules. * **Weaknesses**: Some students lacked depth in analysis and relied heavily on descriptive writing. A need for **greater clarity in coursework expectations** was observed, which could be addressed by using structured rubrics. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessments were thoughtfully designed and increasingly incorporate practical and professional contexts. There was a discussion about **diversifying assessment types** (e.g., using professional reports instead of traditional essays) to encourage originality and reduce plagiarism risks. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was consistently applied across the reviewed material. Feedback was fair, although the report recommended introducing **rubrics for coursework** to improve clarity and ensure uniform standards across branches. This would also support students in understanding performance expectations and improve inter-marker reliability. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Ourania Dimitraki**

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate and meet the expectations for Economics modules at undergraduate level. The learning outcomes and module specifications are clearly defined and reflect the intellectual demands of the subject. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is comparable with that of Economics students in similar UK university programmes. A range of achievement was observed, with some students excelling while others struggled, particularly in analytical components. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| Overall, student work demonstrated sound understanding of economic concepts and theories. High-quality submissions showed clear knowledge of the subject matter and successful achievement of learning outcomes, especially in quantitative analysis. However, in some cases, students lacked depth in theoretical integration and critical evaluation. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students performed well in computational and applied tasks, and demonstrated adequate knowledge of economic models and policy applications. * **Weaknesses**: Some students lacked **critical engagement**, struggled with coherent writing, and showed limited referencing or academic structuring. These issues negatively affected their ability to communicate and justify arguments effectively. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessments were well-designed and covered a range of skills, including problem-solving, interpretation, and theoretical discussion. The examiner recommended enhancing assessment by including **authentic and applied tasks**, such as podcasts or group work, to strengthen employability skills and interdisciplinary relevance. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was generally appropriate, with clear evidence of moderation and fairness. However, the examiner strongly recommended the **adoption of marking rubrics** across all branches to improve consistency, student guidance, and inter-marker reliability. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Hasan Gilani**

**Examined Modules: B870A, B870B, BB849, B873, B863, BB848, BB845, BB864**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate and aligned with the expectations for postgraduate-level business programmes. Module organization, content, and assessment tasks reflect the necessary rigor and meet UK HEI benchmarks for MBA awards. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is comparable to that of students enrolled in MBA programmes at other UK institutions. There was a **normal distribution of grades**, with high achievers demonstrating advanced analytical and strategic capabilities. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| Students showed a strong grasp of core business concepts. High-quality submissions effectively integrated theory and practice, applied frameworks to real-world scenarios, and exhibited strategic insight. The achievement of learning outcomes was evident, particularly in modules that emphasized application. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Stronger students demonstrated **critical thinking**, structured arguments, and strategic applications of business concepts, supported by evidence. * **Weaknesses**: Weaker students tended to write descriptively, lacked depth in analysis, and struggled with **academic writing, referencing**, and coherent argumentation. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessments were **well-designed** and allowed for the testing of a broad range of competencies. The use of **case study analysis, problem-solving, and theoretical application** ensured real-world relevance. A good balance between coursework and examinations was maintained. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was consistent, fair, and clearly aligned with grading criteria. There was visible differentiation between varying levels of student performance. **Feedback was constructive and detailed**, helping students identify areas of improvement. The examiner recommended continued attention to consistency across markers and branches. |

**External Examiner Name: Dr. Fawad Khaleel**

**Examined Modules: B872, B861, B859, BB841, B874, BB851, BDE850, B875**

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The academic standards for the programme/module. |
| The academic standards are appropriate and in line with expectations for postgraduate-level qualifications. The modules reviewed are structured in accordance with relevant benchmarks and qualification frameworks. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes |
| Student performance is **comparable with that of peers in other UK HEIs** offering MBA programmes. The range of achievement across cohorts reflects a healthy distribution of performance levels. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The quality of students’ work, their knowledge and skills and achievement of learning outcomes |
| The students' work indicates that most learning outcomes were achieved effectively. Students generally displayed competence in applying theoretical knowledge to business problems. However, some needed greater emphasis on **critical thinking and evaluation**. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The strengths and weaknesses of the students |
| * **Strengths**: Students demonstrated strong application of knowledge and strategic thinking. Their work often reflected real-world business understanding and practical relevance. * **Weaknesses**: There is still **room for improvement in critical analysis and reflective writing**, which some students struggled with. The report welcomed recent institutional efforts (e.g., workshops) to address this. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Quality of Assessments (design, methods and making schemes) |
| Assessment design was appropriate and well-structured. The incorporation of **new assessment strategies** and more **practical tasks** (e.g., presentations) marked a positive development from previous years, enhancing relevance and student engagement. |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Standards of Marking and grading students’ assessments |
| Marking was **consistent and fairly applied**. However, the examiner recommended making feedback **more consistent across branches** to ensure students receive equitable and developmental input. Overall, grading was aligned with institutional and academic standards. |