

Arab Open University

Summary of External Examiners Reports

Academic Year: 2022/2023

Semester: Summer Semester

Programme: Bachelor

Tracks: (Accounting , Management , Finance, Economics , HRM , Marketing , Systems)

Number of Modules Examined by the External Examiners: 26 Modules

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.

Overall, the standard is satisfactory/pleasing and aligns with the expectations associated with the modules assessed.

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.

As usual the GCCs have submitted assessments for review in a timely fashion and have been very responsive to the EE comments and suggestions in setting assessment and marking them.

My appreciation to the GCCs for their dedication and efficient work in their challenging role of coordinating very large courses and several branches (BCCs).

Commendations:

- Curriculum is of a high standard and there is increased alignment between programme aims, learning outcomes, and assessment. I have not reviewed course materials.
- Good evidence of markers being attentive to detail and in coordinating the branches.

- The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards Have been conducted very efficiently.

Suggestions for Enhancement

- continue to support GCCs so that they feel appreciated and valued in their hard work.
- try to identify ways of improving the quality of tutors; develop training programmes for them.
- Try to focus more on students' transferable and soft skills development, as well as on preparing final year students for the job market.

2- Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: Mehmet Austay

Examined Modules: FIN240 , FIN340 , FIN342

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The standards set in the modules have fulfilled the expectations of agreed subject benchmarks and programme specifications as well as the knowledge and learning expectations

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

They are close to level compared to similar modules in UK universities

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

Regarding the skills and knowledge of students, while they are close to level compared to similar modules in UK universities, students should be encouraged to do better in particular in theory questions. In addition, students should be encouraged to develop their reading skills to respond to essay questions and render interpretations of the quantitative findings.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The main weakness of the students relates to their avoidance of responding to essay questions and avoiding providing an interpretation of the quantitative findings. This is consistently observed from one cohort to another.

The assessments evidence students being better and more comfortable in quantitative questions. Their skills in responding to qualitative questions with the same rigour and confidence should be developed. This requires students to do more reading from referred sources rather than unsolicited internet material.

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

The design and structure of the assessments in terms of quality and the fairness of the contents are at par with the UK universities. Having conceptual and practical aspects, along with short essays in some modules, is essential to student development in terms of different skill sets. The design and structure related to content diversity is effectively demonstrated.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The marking scheme is fair and consistent throughout all the modules I have examined. In addition, students are provided with a reasonable level of comments that can help them develop.

External Examiner Name: Dr Desireé Cranfield

Examined Modules: B628

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The standards set are appropriate for the level of qualification being externally examined.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The quality of the student's work is comparable to other similar institutions undertaking similar programmes of study.

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

Objectives and learning outcomes are clearly written in the course handbooks and individual module specifications.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

It is great to read that despite the challenges at some sites students are making progress. It is also really good to read about increases in some module success rates due to changes in the module content, and despite disruptions. This is an incredible accolade to the students. There are different levels of language proficiency across the samples evident, which translates to lower outcomes. There is a good level of academic sources being used to support the coursework, showing continual improvement.

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

Design and structure of the assessments is fair. Discussions were had to provide more clarity to students and this was included.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Some good practice here as indicated above in some sites where marking scheme is attached to the script and used.

External Examiner Name: Nicholas O'Regan

Examined Modules: B207A , B207B , BUS310

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The standards set in terms of the module content, assignments and examination assessments are appropriate to the award.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The students' work is comparable other institutions with similar undergraduate programmes

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

It is clear that the AOU tutors are committed, hard-working and professional. It is also clear from speaking with some students before the examination board that they feel that their learning has benefited from the quality of teaching and their interactions with the tutors

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The main weaknesses in student responses relate to a reliance on descriptive rather than strategic/analytic approach – or in short what has been covered in class. A greater emphasis on criticality by lecturers is vital and it is also important that marking is appropriate where only answers with descriptive answers can not obtain high marks.

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

- The quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources are appropriate for the level of study.
- The design and structure of the B207A; B207B; BUS310 modules are appropriate to their respective levels of study. The TMA tasks provide opportunities for students to apply the theories/concepts studied to real world contexts. The assessment is both challenging and fair
- The assessments are closely related to the module objectives and provide opportunities for students to achieve the module learning outcomes.
- The assessment have increased critical analysis and synthesis compared with previous assessment periods. This is to be welcomed – although this is a journey that has some way to go – and we must not become complacent.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The marking practice/expectations across all centres are consistent with very good feedback provided to students in all modules. There is evidence of excellent practice in terms of the provision of feedback to students. This should be across all countries and modules

External Examiner Name: Dr Jaafar El-Murad

Examined Modules: B205A, B205B , B324 , B325 , B327 , B629 , MKT331 , MKT332

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The standards set are appropriate.

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

As is to be expected, there was much variability between students. The good ones were excellent, and comparable to their peers on similar programmes at other international institutions, but the weaker students were very poor indeed. I wonder if some staff are unduly reluctant to mark down these very weak efforts, declaring as “Acceptable” work that perhaps ought not to be.

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

The performance of the better students is testimony that the quality of the teaching is excellent, and that lecturers take a keen interest in their subjects and in their students.

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Some students are very weak in English, and that this appears to impact the quality of assessed work they are able to produce. I acknowledge that English courses are compulsory for students depending on their test results on application to the university, but I wonder if the threshold for admission is appropriate.

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

- The design and structure of the assessments was good and challenging, but fair; it was often very interesting.
- The assessments relate to the stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

Marking schemes and grading criteria were generally consistently applied.

External Examiner Name: Dr Mahmoud Abdelrahman

Examined Modules: SYS210 , SYS280 , SYS380

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

A. The academic standards for the programme/module.

Assessment procedures are consistent with the University requirements and all modules reviewed had been internally moderated.

B. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

In the material samples presented across different branches the work developed is comparable in relation to their peers on comparable programmes.

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

The tutors used various ranges of materials, recourses, and tools to keep the students informed via different means and tools. The quality of teaching and learning is seen in the way the knowledge, skills and ability of the tutors were employed to develop meaningful pedagogic experiences for students.

D. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The students understand and answer the questions descriptively and generally. Based on the samples provided, I believe the students need to have more critical reflections and arguments in their answers and needs to develop their academic English writing.

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

- Clear and well designed
- Clear and Relevant

F. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The marks and the feedback demonstrate good practice – as the requirements needed for this module are clear and where marks are given, but the comments are recommended to be shared with the students via Learning Management System online so the students can get access to the feedback online to know how to improve their answers or assessments.