

To:	Academic Council
Date:	13/09/2022
Title of paper / update:	External Examiner Reports and Overall Summary
Author name(s):	Dr Andrew Redford
Author title(s):	Head of Quality
Committee is asked to (delete as appropriate):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To receive

Following the Examination Board on 13/07/2022, External Examiners were sent a template for their annual report. All three Examiners have now submitted a report and a response has been made to each. These are enclosed.

All three External Examiners have provided a number of comments many of which are highly complimentary including:

'I would like to congratulate the staff members for such a successful year. Overall, the students' performance was very high, and this is a reflection of the high standards on teaching and pastoral care of the team, in addition to a strong administrative team taking care of the links.' (Arcuate, E).

'LIS has done well pioneering a new degree programme that balances the expectations and standards of both the UK Higher Education System and the prospective employers and partners students will engage with post-degree. This is extremely important work for the future of education that requires a delicate balance that is not always easy or clear cut and the team has done very well striking this balance in the first year of the programme.' (Padley, A).

'I would like to stress that the assessment processes employed by LIS are exemplary and in line with best practice currently seen across UK institutions. Students are provided with comprehensive and clear outlines of what is expected of them, and they are well prepared for all summative assessment by a very thoughtful scaffolding of formative tasks, carefully outlined learning outcomes and corresponding assessment criteria, and timely and helpful feedback.' (Rolle, S).

Some constructive feedback has been provided which includes:

- Monitoring of overall student workload moving forward
- Ensuring that more general feedback and solutions are included in quantitative modules
- Co creation in assessment

The reports do not indicate any systematic issues or matters of standards that should be a concern to Academic Council.

At the end of this first year, the annual reporting process has worked well with no process issues arising. In addition to the annual report, External Examiners have opportunities for on-going feedback at each marking and moderation point and at the point of assessment brief approval.

The three reports show that External Examiners either agreed or strongly agreed with the following:

Induction, information and your role.

- The induction and the information provided for new External Examiners was useful and appropriate.
- The role of External Examiner was made clear.
- provided with sufficient documentation such as the programme specification and module forms.
- Support and communication from the School has been appropriate.

Standards

- the standards set for the awards were appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.
- the standards of student performance were comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions
- the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.
- students have been able to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level.

Organisation of assessments

- the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.
- students have been able to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level.
- the assessment processes employed were valid and transparent measures of the intended learning outcomes.
- assessment workload and timing is appropriate and well balanced.
- the criteria used in marking were clearly and transparently expressed.
- assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.
- feedback on work has been clearly and transparently expressed.
- a sufficient sample of marked work was received.

Operation of the Examination Board

- The meeting was conducted to satisfaction.
- They were satisfied with the Boards recommendations and decisions.
- the administrative/organisational arrangements enabled them and the Board to carry out our duties effectively.
- Fair and adequate consideration was made of the results and (where applicable) individual students.
- The regulations were consistently and fairly applied by the Board.

Quality of Student Performance

External Examiners confirmed that;

- the overall performance of the students in relation to the aims and objectives of the programme was variable but generally good with one Examiner (for quantitative modules) stating that it was consistently good.
- the quality of understanding and skills (both general and subject-specific) demonstrated by the students was variable but generally good with one Examiner (for quantitative modules) stating that it was consistently good

- the overall student performance indicates that teaching, learning, assessment and support practices are consistently good.

End of Tenure Comments

The report from Prof Arcaute is her first and final report as she has been unable to continue in her tenure due to other commitments. Dr Ilija Rasovic has replaced her from 01/09/2022 (nomination received and approved at Council on 16/06/2022). Prof Arcuate made no end of year comments requiring action or that are of concern.



Annual External Examiner Report

Your Details, Induction, Support and Role

Your Details

1. Your surname	Padley
2. Your first name	Ann
3. Please select the year of your appointment	2021
4. Please select the programme you are an External Examiner for	BASc Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods

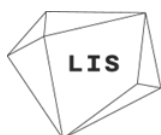
Induction, information and your role.

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The induction and the information provided for new External Examiners was useful and appropriate.	Strongly agree
The role of External Examiner was made clear.	Strongly agree
I was provided with sufficient documentation such as the programme specification and module forms.	Strongly agree
Support and communication from the School has been appropriate.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the induction, clarity of your role or the information provided to you.	
LIS has done well bringing together a diverse group of three external examiners to collect different perspectives on the programme in its first year. The induction was useful and brought together all externals for useful discussions.	

Previous External Examiner Reports

Have you received an appropriate formal written response to issues raised in previous reports (continuing examiners only)? Please elaborate on your response, if appropriate, to provide feedback on progress made in response to issues identified in your previous report.
N/A – This is the first External Examiner Report



Standards and Assessments

Standards

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the standards set for the awards were appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the standards of student performance were comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.	Strongly agree
In your opinion students have been able to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
LIS has done well pioneering a new degree programme that balances the expectations and standards of both the UK Higher Education System and the prospective employers and partners students will engage with post-degree. This is extremely important work for the future of education that requires a delicate balance that is not always easy or clear cut and the team has done very well striking this balance in the first year of the programme.	

Organisation of assessments

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the assessment processes employed were valid and transparent measures of the intended learning outcomes.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, assessment workload and timing is appropriate and well balanced.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the criteria used in marking were clearly and transparently expressed.	Agree
In your opinion, assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, feedback on work has been clearly and transparently expressed.	Strongly agree
You received a sufficient sample of marked work as part of your role.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
The team has done well to structure thoughtful assessments and listened closely to both teacher and student feedback to make ongoing improvements.	
They created a positive marking and feedback process, the feedback to the students was constructive while also clearly indicating how to improve.	
There is an opportunity for continuing work on consistency as well as simplicity/usability of	



Annual External Examiner Report

student-facing assessment briefs and marking rubrics across modules and across different assessment types. This is particularly important considering the blend of group and individual assessments across the programme.

Operation of the Examination Board

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The meeting was conducted to your satisfaction.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied with the Boards recommendations and decisions.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied that the administrative/organisational arrangements enabled me and the Board to carry out our duties effectively.	Strongly agree
Fair and adequate consideration was made of the results and (where applicable) individual students.	Strongly agree
The regulations were consistently and fairly applied by the Board.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the operation of the Examination Board.	
Well done on advanced planning and communication as well as effectively managing a hybrid remote/in-person exam board.	

Quality of Student Performance

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the overall performance of the students in relation to the aims and objectives of the programme was:	Variable but generally good
In your opinion, the quality of understanding and skills (both general and subject-specific) demonstrated by the students was:	Variable but generally good
In your opinion, the overall student performance indicates that teaching, learning, assessment and support practices are	Consistently good
Please use the space below for any general comments (strengths and weaknesses) you have on the overall student performance.	
It is expected that because of the diversity of students from various backgrounds the student performance would be variable, however the team have put in place appropriate mechanisms for teaching, learning, assessment and student support.	

General Comments and Recommendations

Please identify any areas of exceptional practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment (including the currency and coherence of the curriculum, course or learning materials) which you would wish to commend to the School.



Annual External Examiner Report

- The school has done exceptional work on developing teamwork skills through the use of group projects and implementing creative yet effective peer review and feedback processes, coaching support, and involving external partners in project work and feedback.
- The school has also excelled at establishing a clear approach to marking early on that allowed for effective collaboration across markers to ensure accuracy of marks as well as an appropriate diversity of thought in the feedback to students.

What changes and improvements would you want to suggest, if appropriate, to strengthen assessment arrangements, improve the currency and coherence of the curriculum, or to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students?

- Assessment workload and timing will be ongoing work for any programme. As the years progress and the assessment structure shifts, it may be useful to map assessments across each year group to consider distribution of the workload across the full student experience. As additional modules are started within the programme, part of this work will also include ensuring marking criteria are presented consistently across modules and levels.
- As the programme progresses into year 2, it will be important to provide ongoing support and structures so that students will be prepared to articulate and evidence their unique mix of skills upon graduation. *(For example, this might include career positioning, personal branding, development of a portfolio of work, case studies, professional profile/website/cv, etc...)* With this new Interdisciplinary degree, early graduates will have a unique positioning for whatever they choose to do next, however, this also means traditional job postings may be more difficult to navigate or identify with. I am confident this has not gone unnoticed by the LIS team, however it is worth of a reminder as the programme continues to mature and the first cohort nears graduation.

End of tenure

Is this the final year of your tenure as an External Examiner at LIS?

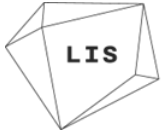
Choose an item.

If your tenure is ending, then please use the space below for any further reflections you have as External Examiner, reflecting on the entirety of your tenure.

Please submit your report by e-mail to andrew.redford@lis.ac.uk

Submitting your report will enable the School to pay your annual External Examiner fee.

You will receive a formal response to your report from the School in due course.

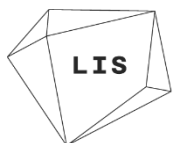


THE LONDON
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Annual External Examiner Report

Your report and the School's response will be received and discussed at the School's Academic Council. It will feed into our annual programme monitoring process and annual quality report. It will also be available to student representatives and included on our VLE for students.

Where your tenure is ending your reports will be shared with the incoming External Examiner for their information.



THE LONDON
INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCHOOL

X & Why
20-30 Whitechapel Road,
London
E1 1EW

VIA E-MAIL

18/08/2022

Re: Response to External Examiner 2021-2022 report

Dear Dr. Padley,

I am writing in response to your 2021-2022 external examiner report for the BASc (Hons) Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods programme at the London Interdisciplinary School.

On behalf of the School may I thank you for your contribution to the School and the programme as an External Examiner in this first year of delivery and thank you for submitting your report. On behalf of the School and the Faculty may I also thank you for your positive feedback in the report including the comments:

'LIS has done well pioneering a new degree programme that balances the expectations and standards of both the UK Higher Education System and the prospective employers and partners students will engage with post-degree. This is extremely important work for the future of education that requires a delicate balance that is not always easy or clear cut and the team has done very well striking this balance in the first year of the programme.'

'The team has done well to structure thoughtful assessments and listened closely to both teacher and student feedback to make ongoing improvements. They created a positive marking and feedback process, the feedback to the students was constructive while also clearly indicating how to improve.'

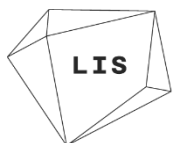
'The School has done exceptional work on developing teamwork skills through the use of group projects and implementing creative yet effective peer review and feedback processes, coaching support, and involving external partners in project work and feedback.'

In response to specific points raised:

'There is an opportunity for continuing work on consistency as well as simplicity/usability of student-facing assessment briefs and marking rubrics across modules and across different assessment types. This is particularly important considering the blend of group and individual assessments across the programme.'

Response: we have revised our assessment brief template for 2022-2023 which provides for increased consistency and simplicity in the provision of assessment information for students; and we will keep this under review during the academic session.

'Assessment workload and timing will be ongoing work for any programme. As the years progress and the assessment structure shifts, it may be useful to map assessments across each year group to consider distribution of the workload across the full student experience.'



THE LONDON
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20-30 Whitechapel Road,
London
E1 1EW

As additional modules are started within the programme, part of this work will also include ensuring marking criteria are presented consistently across modules and levels.'

Response: we are conscious of the need to monitor student workload across the programme. Once assessment deadlines are finalised we will share our mapping document with all External Examiners. To aide consistency a template for assessment briefs has also been revised for 2022-2023. We are also holding our second rolling internal audit in 2022-2023 which will focus on assessment and as part of that will also consider how consistency can be maintained as we move forward with the additional levels of delivery.

'As the programme progresses into year 2, it will be important to provide ongoing support and structures so that students will be prepared to articulate and evidence their unique mix of skills upon graduation. (For example, this might include career positioning, personal branding, development of a portfolio of work, case studies, professional profile/website/cv, etc...) With this new Interdisciplinary degree, early graduates will have a unique positioning for whatever they choose to do next, however, this also means traditional job postings may be more difficult to navigate or identify with. I am confident this has not gone unnoticed by the LIS team, however it is worth of a reminder as the programme continues to mature and the first cohort nears graduation.'

Response: thank you for highlighting this. This is a priority which we will complete by the end of year 3. We certainly will be continuing to support students as they progress through the programme towards completion and graduation. This will include support from our Careers Manager who will lead, in conjunction with Faculty, preparations for employment after LIS. Students will also have a final transcript, which is currently in development.

Should you have any queries or require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me and we look forward to continuing to work with you as our External Examiner.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Andrew Redford

Head of Quality



Your Details, Induction, Support and Role

Your Details

1. Your surname	Rolle
2. Your first name	Sabine
3. Please select the year of your appointment	2021
4. Please select the programme you are an External Examiner for	BASc Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods

Induction, information and your role.

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The induction and the information provided for new External Examiners was useful and appropriate.	Strongly agree
The role of External Examiner was made clear.	Strongly agree
I was provided with sufficient documentation such as the programme specification and module forms.	Strongly agree
Support and communication from the School has been appropriate.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the induction, clarity of your role or the information provided to you.	
I very much appreciated the induction meeting offered at the beginning – this was a great opportunity not only to discuss the expectations and processes around the EE role but also to meet the other externals for the programme as well as the local LIS team. The sharing of programme and module forms online (both via AULA at the beginning and, later on, via shared folders) worked very well.	

Previous External Examiner Reports

Have you received an appropriate formal written response to issues raised in previous reports (continuing examiners only)? Please elaborate on your response, if appropriate, to provide feedback on progress made in response to issues identified in your previous report.
N/A - this is the first External Examiner report (at the end of the first year of the programme).



Standards and Assessments

Standards

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the standards set for the awards were appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the standards of student performance were comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.	Strongly agree
In your opinion students have been able to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
<p>It is hard to draw comparisons to 'similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions' as the BASC Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods is fairly unique. However, the standards set for the individual modules were fully appropriate and the standard of student performance, if anything, exceeded my expectations – it was remarkable how well students responded to the demands placed on them. They were given plenty of opportunity to excel (i.e., achieve beyond threshold level) and I have seen numerous examples of student work where the teaching, learning and assessment methods had clearly encouraged and facilitated thinking of highest academic standard.</p>	

Organisation of assessments

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the assessment processes employed were valid and transparent measures of the intended learning outcomes.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, assessment workload and timing is appropriate and well balanced.	Agree
In your opinion, the criteria used in marking were clearly and transparently expressed.	Agree
In your opinion, assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, feedback on work has been clearly and transparently expressed.	Agree
You received a sufficient sample of marked work as part of your role.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
<p>I would like to stress that the assessment processes employed by LIS are exemplary and in line with best practice currently seen across UK institutions. Students are provided with comprehensive and clear outlines of what is expected of them, and they are well prepared for all summative assessment by a very thoughtful scaffolding of formative tasks, carefully outlined learning outcomes and corresponding assessment criteria, and timely and helpful feedback.</p>	



I do wonder, however, whether the amount of summative assessment could potentially be reduced (potentially by shifting summative assessment to the programme level, i.e. to the modules where students synthesize the learning from across the degree). This would be in line with recommendations from current research on effective and inclusive assessment. Similarly, current research emphasizes the benefits of student-staff co-creation in the development of assessment criteria and marking descriptors to further enhance their clarity and effectiveness from a student's perspective. Is that something the programme team might consider?

Operation of the Examination Board

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The meeting was conducted to your satisfaction.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied with the Boards recommendations and decisions.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied that the administrative/organisational arrangements enabled me and the Board to carry out our duties effectively.	Strongly agree
Fair and adequate consideration was made of the results and (where applicable) individual students.	Strongly agree
The regulations were consistently and fairly applied by the Board.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the operation of the Examination Board.	

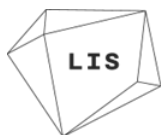
All External Examiners had full access to all documents needed, and I particularly appreciated being able to gain some insight to arrangements and processes (e.g., moderation processes) beyond the confinements of the modules and scripts I was responsible for – this gave me a broader insight into the assessment processes as a whole.

The board was very well organized; the fact that it was run electronically, and with access to all the necessary data in advance, allowed sufficient time to scrutinize student mark profiles and recommendations asynchronously before the final (synchronous) board. This, in turn, freed up time during the board for the discussion of more complex cases.

Quality of Student Performance

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the overall performance of the students in relation to the aims and objectives of the programme was:	Variable but generally good
In your opinion, the quality of understanding and skills (both general and subject-specific) demonstrated by the students was:	Variable but generally good
In your opinion, the overall student performance indicates that teaching, learning, assessment and support practices are	Consistently good
Please use the space below for any general comments (strengths and weaknesses) you have on the overall student performance.	



I am fully satisfied that students were offered all the support they needed to understand and meet the aims and objectives of the programme, through a combination of clear module outlines, assessment briefings, scaffolded learning activities, written and verbal feedback and more general student support structures.

Variability in student performance is to be expected in any programme that allows students to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level. There are multiple reasons for this; in some cases it may simply be a reflection of the students' different interests or aims. The School has created a set of student support structures and proactively seeks the dialogue with any student who is struggling to meet the demands of the programme, and offers additional help wherever it is needed.

The only slight concern I have are for students who seem to have struggled to express themselves clearly in written work, maybe simply due to a lack of writing practice. Could the School potentially further increase its efforts in identifying such students even earlier in the year and offer them additional support? (But I'm aware that not all students are equally open to this offer, for a range of reasons.)

General Comments and Recommendations

Please identify any areas of exceptional practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment (including the currency and coherence of the curriculum, course or learning materials) which you would wish to commend to the School.

There is so much to commend about this programme that it is hard to decide what to highlight specifically!

The School has set out to design and deliver a highly ambitious programme of learning, challenging students to develop and apply knowledge and skills in a whole range of academic methods and bringing them together in exploration of complex problems. This kind of learning is very demanding for students who, in many cases, have very little prior experience with this approach and little knowledge of the theories and methods they are asked to use. But the degree programme clearly works; I was continuously impressed by the variety and ambition of the outputs produced by your students.

To pick just a few aspects I thought were highly commendable:

- There is a clear overview of how the different components of the programme are linked and contribute to overall programme learning aims. This is shared also with students, for example via the module forms that clearly map learning and assessment task against both course and programme learning outcomes, allowing them to successfully navigate the complex field of interdisciplinary studies which is likely rather unfamiliar to most of them.
- This overview is evident also in the careful mapping of assessment points across individual modules; I was very impressed by the visualization of the semester's work, including a week-by-week breakdown of course topics and assessment deadlines you had produced (and, again, shared with students as well?) at the beginning of the year.
- Dedicating the third term to the completion of a more substantive project (i.e., exploration of a complex problem from different angles) is a great way to encourage students to reflect on, consolidate and apply what they have learned over the year.
- Students are given a lot of choice in the projects they want to pursue. Even though this may



be challenging for some, it encourages and facilitates the kind of self-directed deep learning higher education should aspire to (but which is not always supported by structures elsewhere). It is great to see such a range of submissions, both in terms of problems/content covered and ways to communicate the ideas, research and findings; this is testament to your students' creativity as well as their intellectual ability, and how you fostered both during their first year at LIS.

- The assessment briefing documents produced for each module are comprehensive, detailed and a very good way of ensuring that students have all the information they need in one place, including a reminder of assessment criteria and marking descriptors.
- I was impressed by the highly agile iterative design processes, where course teams continuously reflect on what is or isn't going well (incorporating feedback received from students, examiners and other stakeholders as well as their own observations), and react quickly to amend course structures and information material. The School is clearly a learning institution itself, modeling what your degree asks your students to do as part of their learning (after all, building an Interdisciplinary School that offers meaningful and coherent programmes of study is itself a highly complex challenge).

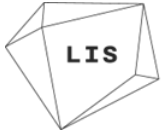
What changes and improvements would you want to suggest, if appropriate, to strengthen assessment arrangements, improve the currency and coherence of the curriculum, or to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students?

As I said, the programme clearly works very well, not least because staff clearly has a common sense of purpose and clear idea of what they want to achieve, honed through structured processes of reflection and discussion. The following points are thus to be read as very general suggestions for areas to **potentially** explore in future:

- As already mentioned above, I'd suggest further strengthening of the programme-level synthesis, potentially by reducing the amount of summative assessment in individual modules to free up time and send the signal that the overall programme aims are what drives the teaching and learning in the various components.
- In addition, there may be opportunity for the programme team to explore opportunities for 'ungrading', in line with suggestions from recent research, not least to encourage a move away from extrinsic (i.e., marks driven) towards more intrinsic learning motivation.
- Both of the above can potentially also help with supporting student wellbeing (important at a time where record numbers of students report mental health problems – your students may have experienced that too). It might thus complement other, more targeted areas of remedial support for students who are struggling with specific elements of the degree, such as the written communication skills that I highlighted above.

End of tenure

Is this the final year of your tenure as an External Examiner at LIS?	No
If your tenure is ending, then please use the space below for any further reflections you have as External Examiner, reflecting on the entirety of your tenure.	



Annual External Examiner Report

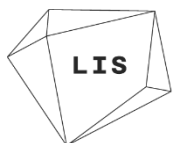
Please submit your report by e-mail to andrew.redford@lis.ac.uk

Submitting your report will enable the School to pay your annual External Examiner fee.

You will receive a formal response to your report from the School in due course.

Your report and the School's response will be received and discussed at the School's Academic Council. It will feed into our annual programme monitoring process and annual quality report. It will also be available to student representatives and included on our VLE for students.

Where your tenure is ending your reports will be shared with the incoming External Examiner for their information.



VIA E-MAIL

18/08/2022

Re: Response to External Examiner 2021-2022 report

Dear Dr. Rolle,

I am writing in response to your 2021-2022 external examiner report for the BAsC (Hons) Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods programme at the London Interdisciplinary School.

On behalf of the School may I thank you for your contribution to the School and the programme as an External Examiner in this first year of delivery and thank you for submitting your report. On behalf of the School and the Faculty may I also thank you for your positive feedback in the report including the comments:

'...standards set for the individual modules were fully appropriate and the standard of student performance, if anything, exceeded my expectations – it was remarkable how well students responded to the demands placed on them. They were given plenty of opportunity to excel (i.e., achieve beyond threshold level) and I have seen numerous examples of student work where the teaching, learning and assessment methods had clearly encouraged and facilitated thinking of highest academic standard.'

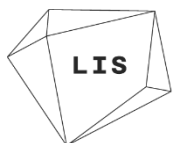
'I would like to stress that the assessment processes employed by LIS are exemplary and in line with best practice currently seen across UK institutions. Students are provided with comprehensive and clear outlines of what is expected of them, and they are well prepared for all summative assessment by a very thoughtful scaffolding of formative tasks, carefully outlined learning outcomes and corresponding assessment criteria, and timely and helpful feedback.'

'I was continuously impressed by the variety and ambition of the outputs produced by your students.'

'Dedicating the third term to the completion of a more substantive project (i.e., exploration of a complex problem from different angles) is a great way to encourage students to reflect on, consolidate and apply what they have learned over the year.'

'Students are given a lot of choice in the projects they want to pursue. Even though this may be challenging for some, it encourages and facilitates the kind of self-directed deep learning higher education should aspire to'

'It is great to see such a range of submissions, both in terms of problems/content covered and ways to communicate the ideas, research and findings; this is testament to your students' creativity as well as their intellectual ability, and how you fostered both during their first year at LIS.'



'The assessment briefing documents produced for each module are comprehensive, detailed and a very good way of ensuring that students have all the information they need in one place, including a reminder of assessment criteria and marking descriptors.'

In response to specific points raised:

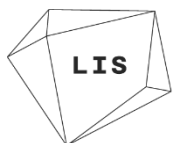
'I do wonder, however, whether the amount of summative assessment could potentially be reduced (potentially by shifting summative assessment to the programme level, i.e. to the modules where students synthesize the learning from across the degree). This would be in line with recommendations from current research on effective and inclusive assessment. Similarly, current research emphasizes the benefits of student-staff co-creation in the development of assessment criteria and marking descriptors to further enhance their clarity and effectiveness from a student's perspective. Is that something the programme team might consider?'

'As already mentioned above, I'd suggest further strengthening of the programme-level synthesis, potentially by reducing the amount of summative assessment in individual modules to free up time and send the signal that the overall programme aims are what drives the teaching and learning in the various components.'

Response: we are conscious of the need to monitor student workload across the programme. Once assessment deadlines are finalised we will share our mapping document with all External Examiners and we will provide a graphic of workload to students at induction. Co-creation in assessment is an area in which we hope to continue to develop over time as we establish the delivery of individual modules and wider assessment practices in the School. We did involve students in some co-creation of Problems 1a this year but the timing of approval and then publication of assessment briefs can make co-creating assessments challenging. We will also be asking students to create some collective extra guidance for themselves over the course of Problems 1a to ensure that they really make sense of the marking criteria.

'The only slight concern I have are for students who seem to have struggled to express themselves clearly in written work, maybe simply due to a lack of writing practice. Could the School potentially further increase its efforts in identifying such students even earlier in the year and offer them additional support? (But I'm aware that not all students are equally open to this offer, for a range of reasons.)'

Response: in modifying modules at the end of this first year of delivery we have in a number of cases increased formative assessment in year 1. The formative assessments will assist in providing space for students to develop their writing and other skills as well as to provide opportunities to pinpoint students who might need additional support. This will work in tandem with our existing regular coaching (personal tutors) sessions throughout terms 1 and 2. We are also looking in to develop a writing support group along the lines of our existing 'quant café'. This is an area which we will continue to monitor during 2022-2023.



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'In addition, there may be opportunity for the programme team to explore opportunities for 'ungrading', in line with suggestions from recent research, not least to encourage a move away from extrinsic (i.e., marks driven) towards more intrinsic learning motivation.'

Response: this is an area of interest as any increase in continual feedback, students own critical reflection as well as a focus on learning rather than on solely a final mark is desirable. It is however an area that must be balanced between student expectation management in relation to assessment as well as standards and external comparability. As delivery and teaching, learning and assessment practices become embedded within our new institution this is something that we would be keen to explore more widely and would seek to include our External Examiners in that discussion.

Should you have any queries or require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me and we look forward to continuing to work with you as our External Examiner.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Andrew Redford

Head of Quality



Your Details, Induction, Support and Role

Your Details

1. Your surname	Arcaute
2. Your first name	Elsa
3. Please select the year of your appointment	2021
4. Please select the programme you are an External Examiner for	BASc Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods

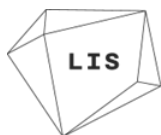
Induction, information and your role.

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The induction and the information provided for new External Examiners was useful and appropriate.	Strongly agree
The role of External Examiner was made clear.	Strongly agree
I was provided with sufficient documentation such as the programme specification and module forms.	Strongly agree
Support and communication from the School has been appropriate.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the induction, clarity of your role or the information provided to you.	
The team was extremely accessible and delivered all material promptly. In addition, it was very constructive to have the induction with all the examiners together.	

Previous External Examiner Reports

Have you received an appropriate formal written response to issues raised in previous reports (continuing examiners only)? Please elaborate on your response, if appropriate, to provide feedback on progress made in response to issues identified in your previous report.
I received an appropriate response to all the comments I made in my reports. In addition, I could also see these being included in the iteration of the assessment.



Standards and Assessments

Standards

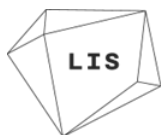
Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the standards set for the awards were appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the standards of student performance were comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.	Strongly agree
In your opinion students have been able to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold level.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
The total average and distribution of marks seemed high for some quantitative modules, and very different to the qualitative ones. This was discussed at length during the board, and given the nature of the programme, it is to be expected. The modules that showed the highest variance in terms of marks, are actually the ones where students had the opportunity to develop projects beyond the threshold level. For some students, these were the most challenging modules. Although this was also discussed at length, I would like to reiterate that such assessments are important, since they help students push themselves for more ambitious goals, and take risks to develop more creative insights.	

Organisation of assessments

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the assessment processes employed were valid and transparent measures of the intended learning outcomes.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, assessment workload and timing is appropriate and well balanced.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, the criteria used in marking were clearly and transparently expressed.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	Strongly agree
In your opinion, feedback on work has been clearly and transparently expressed.	Agree
You received a sufficient sample of marked work as part of your role.	Strongly agree
Please provide a brief statement of the respect(s) in which they fall short or exceed expectations.	
As per my previous reports, I proposed a framework where in addition to the specific feedback, generic feedback was also given to students, with the solutions when possible. Furthermore, the feedback should allow students to reflect on what is it that they needed to have done to achieve the next level mark.	



Annual External Examiner Report

Operation of the Examination Board

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

The meeting was conducted to your satisfaction.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied with the Boards recommendations and decisions.	Strongly agree
I was satisfied that the administrative/organisational arrangements enabled me and the Board to carry out our duties effectively.	Strongly agree
Fair and adequate consideration was made of the results and (where applicable) individual students.	Strongly agree
The regulations were consistently and fairly applied by the Board.	Strongly agree
Please use this space for any comments you have on the operation of the Examination Board.	
The board was conducted in a transparent and orderly manner. All module leaders and examiners had the opportunity to comment and exchange different points of views.	

Quality of Student Performance

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:

In your opinion, the overall performance of the students in relation to the aims and objectives of the programme was:	Consistently good
In your opinion, the quality of understanding and skills (both general and subject-specific) demonstrated by the students was:	Consistently good
In your opinion, the overall student performance indicates that teaching, learning, assessment and support practices are	Consistently good
Please use the space below for any general comments (strengths and weaknesses) you have on the overall student performance.	
I would like to congratulate the staff members for such a successful year. Overall, the students' performance was very high, and this is a reflection of the high standards on teaching and pastoral care of the team, in addition to a strong administrative team taking care of the links.	

General Comments and Recommendations

Please identify any areas of exceptional practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment (including the currency and coherence of the curriculum, course or learning materials) which you would wish to commend to the School.
I commend the school for the interdisciplinary and hands on approach to learning. The programme includes a strong component on data science, which is accompanied by a strong component on



critical reflection and analysis. Methods are learnt by directly applying them and critically reflecting on their limitations.

What changes and improvements would you want to suggest, if appropriate, to strengthen assessment arrangements, improve the currency and coherence of the curriculum, or to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students?

Overall, I am very happy with the programme. There's room for improvement in the marking process of the quantitative modules, where most students have merits and distinctions. In addition, a generic feedback with the results can also be developed so that students understand better what was expected from them.

End of tenure

Is this the final year of your tenure as an External Examiner at LIS?

Yes

If your tenure is ending, then please use the space below for any further reflections you have as External Examiner, reflecting on the entirety of your tenure.

Many congratulations, I am sorry I cannot continue in my role, due to other commitments. The atmosphere is very positive, and all staff members are fully committed to develop a programme of the highest standard. It has been a pleasure.

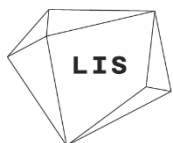
Please submit your report by e-mail to andrew.redford@lis.ac.uk

Submitting your report will enable the School to pay your annual External Examiner fee.

You will receive a formal response to your report from the School in due course.

Your report and the School's response will be received and discussed at the School's Academic Council. It will feed into our annual programme monitoring process and annual quality report. It will also be available to student representatives and included on our VLE for students.

Where your tenure is ending your reports will be shared with the incoming External Examiner for their information.



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VIA E-MAIL

18/08/2022

Re: Response to External Examiner 2021-2022 report

Dear Prof. Arcaute,

I am writing in response to your 2021-2022 external examiner report for the BAsC (Hons) Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods programme at the London Interdisciplinary School.

On behalf of the School may I thank you for your contribution to the School and the programme as an External Examiner in this first year of delivery and thank you for submitting your report. On behalf of the School and the Faculty may I also thank you for your positive feedback in the report including the comments:

'I would like to congratulate the staff members for such a successful year. Overall, the students' performance was very high, and this is a reflection of the high standards on teaching and pastoral care of the team, in addition to a strong administrative team taking care of the links.'

'I commend the school for the interdisciplinary and hands on approach to learning. The programme includes a strong component on data science, which is accompanied by a strong component on critical reflection and analysis. Methods are learnt by directly applying them and critically reflecting on their limitations.'

In response to specific points raised:

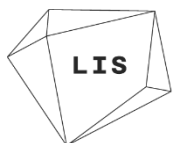
'As per my previous reports, I proposed a framework where in addition to the specific feedback, generic feedback was also given to students, with the solutions when possible. Furthermore, the feedback should allow students to reflect on what is it that they needed to have done to achieve the next level mark.'

'...In addition, a generic feedback with the results can also be developed so that students understand better what was expected from them.'

Response: we shall continue to ensure that generic feedback for the cohort, together with the solutions will be provided in addition to specific individual feedback.

'Overall, I am very happy with the programme. There's room for improvement in the marking process of the quantitative modules, where most students have merits and distinctions.'

Response: thank you for your comments in relation to this issue. We shall continue to enhance our processes and will work with the new External Examiner in this regard. In addition, the School's rolling internal audit process will focus on assessment and feedback



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during 2022-2023 and this will no doubt also feed in potential advice for enhancement in the marking process.

The School also thanks you for your remarks in your end of tenure comments and we are certainly grateful for the comments and feedback you have provided over the duration of your tenure.

May I take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the School once again for your time and advice as External Examiner in this important year in the School's history.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Andrew Redford

Head of Quality