



Arab Open University

Summary of External Examiners Reports

Academic Year: _____2025/2026_____

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.

The External Examiner confirmed that the assessment standards are appropriate and consistent across the reviewed modules. The assessment processes comply with university regulations, with clear assessment criteria, comprehensive marking guidelines, and appropriate internal moderation. The marks awarded were found to be fairly and consistently applied across the different branches.

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.

The External Examiner confirmed that all required samples were shared electronically and that the materials provided were suitable and relevant. Sufficient evidence was received to enable the External Examiner to complete the review effectively.

Commendations:

The External Examiner commended the strong integration of business case studies, which supported students in linking theory to real-world practice. The variety of assessment formats, presentations, and lab sessions were also highlighted as positive developments that enhance student engagement, academic integrity, and practical learning. The report also recognised tutors' professional dedication, effective use of resources, and responsiveness to previous recommendations.

Suggestions for Enhancement

The External Examiner suggested further strengthening students' critical reflection, deeper analysis, academic writing, and argumentation when applying theories and models. The report also recommended offering Research Methodology courses or workshops, particularly for MBA students, and further developing AI and Business Intelligence content, balanced lecture-lab structures, postgraduate and online offerings, and exchange opportunities between AOU branches.

2. Extracts from External Examiners report form

External Examiner Name: Dr. 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 confirmed that the academic standards set for the award and the reviewed modules are appropriate. The assessment demands match the level of study and are well aligned with the programme specification and relevant benchmarking expectations. Overall, the standard required for progression and award remains suitable and consistent.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that students' performance is comparable with similar business programmes elsewhere. Many scripts demonstrated sound subject knowledge, a clear understanding of core concepts, and the ability to apply theory to practical contexts. Further emphasis on structured academic argument and evidence-based critical evaluation would strengthen performance across a wider group of students.

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

Students' work reflected sound knowledge and skills, particularly where students engaged effectively with module materials and assessment guidance. The reviewed scripts showed students' ability to apply learning to practical business contexts and demonstrate achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

Continued development of critical evaluation, academic writing structure, and referencing skills would further enhance student achievement.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students' strengths were evident in applied tasks, use of examples to support discussion, and engagement with module materials and assessment guidance. The main areas for improvement are deeper critical analysis, clearer academic writing structure, and more confident use of evidence and referencing conventions.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that the assessment design and structure are appropriate and well balanced. The assessments encourage application of learning to realistic business situations and support the development of employability-related skills. They are clearly aligned with the intended learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate achievement at the expected level.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner indicated that marking decisions are consistent with the published criteria and supported by clear evidence of internal moderation. Feedback was generally helpful and developmental. A suggested enhancement is to adopt a more consistently structured approach to feedforward, so students receive clearer guidance on how to improve in future assessments.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Raye Ng

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the standards set are appropriate for the subject area, level of study, and award level. The standards were also considered comparable to those observed in other UK higher education institutions.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner noted that the reviewed scripts reflected a spread of grades and marks, and that the comments and grades were aligned with the approved marking criteria. Student performance was considered to be on par with similar standards in other UK higher education institutions. However, further development of deeper analysis and reflection across all branches was recommended.

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

Students' work showed evidence of engagement with the assessment requirements, with some students demonstrating direct responses to questions and critical analysis. The learning outcomes were considered appropriate for the level of study and aligned with the subject benchmark. Further improvement is recommended in relation to depth of analysis, reflection, and the accurate use of relevant references.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students' strengths were evident in their ability to respond directly to questions and, in some cases, demonstrate critical analysis. Areas for development include answering questions more precisely, improving language proficiency, strengthening the depth of analysis, and using relevant references more extensively and accurately. The External Examiner also recommended additional language support and more detailed feedback to guide students' improvement.

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

The External Examiner reported that the design and structure of assessments are reasonably robust and fair. The report positively noted the development of modules and relevant changes made to assessment design. The marking criteria were described as detailed and elaborate, and the embedding of marking rubrics across the modules was commended.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner confirmed that there is evidence that the marking scheme and grading criteria have been used. The report also noted evidence of cross-branch marking and standardisation. However, it recommended ensuring greater consistency in the depth and quality of marking and feedback across all branches and campuses, with feedback more clearly aligned to the marking criteria.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Jaafar El-Murad

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the standards set for the Marketing modules are appropriate for the award and relevant programme requirements.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner noted that students demonstrated the expected range of general and subject-specific knowledge and skills. Some students produced excellent work across the assessments, which compared well with peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.

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

Students' work reflected a range of abilities. Stronger students demonstrated a solid grasp of course material, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate clearly and coherently in written English. The assessments were generally appropriate in relation to the stated objectives and learning outcomes.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The main strengths identified were students' understanding of course material, critical thought, and clear written expression among stronger students. Areas for development included applying key concepts to real or

hypothetical situations and addressing questions more directly and adequately. The External Examiner also commended the Deanship's initiatives to support weaker students while maintaining rigorous admission and progression standards.

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

The External Examiner reported that the assessment design and structure were generally good, with only minor suggestions made to GCCs. These suggestions were received positively. The assessments were also considered generally appropriate in relation to the intended objectives and learning outcomes.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner noted that GCCs provide marking guides and, in some cases, detailed model answers to support marking. Overall, marking was considered appropriate and mostly consistent, with tutors providing good feedback. A small number of cases of exceptionally high marking were identified, and appropriate action was taken. The report also suggested further guidance or staff development on answer guides and welcomed the Dean's initiatives, including the use of rubrics.

External Examiner Name: Prof. Javed Siddiqui

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner indicated that the academic standards are satisfactory and compare well with those of similar institutions.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that the quality of students' work was generally satisfactory, with some students producing high-quality work.

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

Students' work was considered satisfactory overall. The assessment design, structure, and alignment with the stated objectives and learning outcomes were also confirmed as satisfactory.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The External Examiner noted that accounting students appear to be strong quantitatively. However, some students struggle with questions requiring qualitative analysis.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that the quality and fairness of assessments, including their design, structure, and relation to the stated objectives and learning outcomes, were satisfactory.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner reported satisfactory evidence that markers were consistently applying the grading criteria. He also noted significant improvements in the quality of feedback.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Alija Avdukic

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the standards set by AOU are appropriate and aligned with relevant subject benchmarks, qualifications frameworks, and programme specifications. The standards are comparable with sector norms and demonstrate that expectations for awards at the relevant level are being met.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that the quality of students' work, including their general and subject-specific knowledge and skills, is consistently high and compares very favourably with students on comparable programmes elsewhere.

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

Students demonstrated consistently high-quality work, reflecting strong general and subject-specific knowledge and skills. This was seen as evidence of AOU's robust academic framework and commitment to academic excellence. The assessments were also aligned with the programme's stated objectives and learning outcomes, supporting coherent achievement of intended learning.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The External Examiner noted that strong student performance, particularly among high achievers, reflects effective teaching and student mastery of the subject. However, some students showed limited depth in their responses, indicating a need for stronger critical engagement. Weaker English proficiency was also identified as affecting comprehension and leading to incomplete or occasionally off-topic answers.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that the assessments are well designed and appropriately structured to evaluate student learning effectively and fairly. The assessments are also appropriately aligned with the programme's stated objectives and learning outcomes.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner reported that marking is fair and consistent, particularly in the Finance modules. The grading criteria were applied clearly and systematically, ensuring equitable and reliable evaluation.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Desireé Cranfield

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the standards set for the award and its modules are appropriate and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, programme specifications, and sector-recognised qualifications frameworks. The assessments are pitched at the correct level, and the academic standards remain comparable to similar programmes.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that students' work across the reviewed modules is broadly comparable to peers on similar programmes at equivalent levels. Stronger cohorts, particularly at upper levels, demonstrated good conceptual understanding, applied analysis, and appropriate subject-specific knowledge. Overall, students' knowledge, skills, and achievement are appropriate for comparable programmes in the sector.

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

Students demonstrated appropriate knowledge, skills, and achievement across the reviewed modules. Stronger students showed good conceptual understanding, applied knowledge, and the ability to apply theory to practice. Although some variation exists across branches and lower-level modules, overall performance remains within the expected range for the award level.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students' strengths include good conceptual understanding, strong applied knowledge in upper-level modules, well-structured responses where assessment criteria are clear, and solid engagement with module content. Areas for development include deeper explanation, stronger critical analysis, more developed ideas, improved extended writing structure, and greater consistency across branches.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that assessments are generally well structured, clearly presented, fair, coherent, and appropriate for the level. The assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate relevant skills and align well with module learning outcomes and broader programme objectives. Minor issues related mainly to the clarity of mark allocation rather than assessment design.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner reported that marking is generally sound, with clear evidence of moderation and second-marker review. In most cases, grading criteria were applied appropriately and consistently across branches. Where inconsistencies were identified, such as generous marking for brief answers or unclear mark allocation, these were considered procedural rather than systemic. Strengthening marking guidance was recommended to support greater consistency across centres.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Ourania Dimitraki

Examined Modules: DD209A, DD309A, DD309B, ECO340

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the standards set are appropriate for the award and are well aligned with relevant subject benchmark statements and qualifications frameworks. The programme specifications clearly articulate the expected learning outcomes at the appropriate level, and the assessment criteria reflect the required knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of graduates in the field.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that the quality of students' work is comparable to that of peers on similar programmes at other institutions. Students demonstrated sound knowledge and appropriate subject-specific skills. The strongest work showed critical thinking and independent analysis consistent with sector-wide standards, while weaker submissions remained within acceptable bounds for the award.

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

Students demonstrated sound knowledge, appropriate subject-specific skills, and achievement of the expected learning outcomes. Stronger submissions showed critical thinking and independent analysis. Student performance also indicated effective teaching and learning, with student work demonstrating good understanding of key concepts.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students' strengths include strong analytical abilities, good engagement with core concepts, effective communication skills, practical application of theory, and independent research capabilities. Areas for improvement include critical evaluation, synthesis of multiple sources, time management, and depth of analysis in some cases.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that the assessment design is appropriate and includes a good variety of assessment methods that test different skills and knowledge areas. The assessments are clearly related to the stated learning outcomes and module objectives, providing valid measures of student achievement.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner confirmed that marking schemes were applied consistently and fairly. The grading criteria were transparent, and there was evidence of internal moderation. The distribution of marks was appropriate and reflected genuine differences in student performance.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Hasan Gilani

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that the academic standards set for the award and the reviewed modules are appropriate. Assessment demands match the level of study and align well with the programme specification and relevant benchmarking expectations. Overall, the standard of achievement required for progression and award remains suitable and consistent.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner stated that the standard of students' work is comparable with that seen on similar business programmes elsewhere. Many scripts demonstrated sound subject knowledge, a clear grasp of core concepts, and a good ability to apply theory to practical contexts.

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

Students' work showed sound subject knowledge, understanding of core concepts, and the ability to apply theory to practical contexts. The assessments were clearly aligned with the intended learning outcomes and enabled students to demonstrate achievement at the expected level.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

Students performed strongly when they engaged consistently with module materials and assessment guidance, particularly in applied tasks and in using examples to support discussion. The main areas for development are deeper critical analysis, clearer academic writing structure, and more confident use of evidence and referencing conventions.

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

The External Examiner confirmed that the design and structure of assessments across the modules are appropriate and well balanced. The tasks encourage application of learning to realistic business situations and support the development of employability-related skills.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner reported that marking decisions appear consistent with the published criteria, with clear evidence of internal moderation. Feedback was generally helpful and developmental. A suggested enhancement is to adopt a more consistently structured approach to feedforward, so students receive clearer guidance on how to improve in future work.

External Examiner Name: Dr. Fawad Khaleel

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

Please comment as appropriate on the following:

a. The academic standards for the programme/module.

The External Examiner confirmed that appropriate standards are set and followed during the assessment proceedings.

b. Performance of students in comparison to similar programmes

The External Examiner reported that the quality of students' work is comparable with peers on similar programmes in other higher education institutions and universities.

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

Students' work was considered comparable to that of peers in other institutions. The report also confirmed that the assessment objectives and learning outcomes are appropriate, and that the quality of learning, teaching, and assessment is good.

d. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

The External Examiner commended AOU for actively implementing measures and initiatives to enhance students' critical thinking skills. As an area for further development, the report recommended additional support to strengthen students' analytical skills, both qualitative and quantitative, through workshops and guest lectures.

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

The External Examiner indicated that the design and structure of the assessments were good, and that the assessments are appropriate in relation to the stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

f. Standards of Marking and grading students' assessments

The External Examiner confirmed that the marking scheme and grades are consistently applied.