

## External Examiner Annual Report 2024-25

SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION			
Name:	[REDACTED]		
Partner Organisation(s)	Bloomsbury Institute		
Academic Faculty:	Faculty of Social and Life Sciences		
List all programme titles and awards examined in this period:	MBA at Bloomsbury Institute (validated provision)		
External Examiner's home institution (or other affiliation):	[REDACTED]	Professional registration number and expiry/renewal date (if applicable):	Not Applicable
Year of Tenure:	Third	Have you completed the Advanced HE External Examiner professional development course?	Yes

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC STANDARDS	
Please provide feedback on academic standards	
<p>Were the threshold academic standards consistent with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and relevant characteristic/subject benchmark statement(s)?</p> <p><a href="#">Qualifications Frameworks</a>  <a href="#">Subject Benchmark Statements</a>  <a href="#">Characteristics Statements</a></p>	Yes
<p>Were the academic standards comparable to similar programmes in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?</p>	Yes

## SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Please provide feedback on academic standards

Please provide detailed feedback in relation to academic standards.

External Examiner Feedback – Bloomsbury MBA Programmes  
Academic Year: 2024/2025 External Examiner: David Bolton

1. Academic Standards I am pleased to confirm that the academic standards of the Bloomsbury MBA programmes are entirely appropriate for awards at Level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The programme demonstrates a robust alignment with national benchmark standards and maintains a coherent and rigorous academic structure. Assessment strategies are well designed to challenge students and enable them to demonstrate critical thinking, analytical depth, and applied knowledge. There is clear evidence of constructive alignment between learning outcomes, assessment tasks, and marking criteria. Feedback provided to students is consistently detailed, developmental in tone, and supportive of progression. Where appropriate, feedforward comments help students reflect on their performance and plan for future assignments. There is an impressive level of intellectual challenge embedded across modules, particularly in relation to strategy, leadership, and entrepreneurship. The work I reviewed demonstrated not only academic rigour but also a strong focus on practical application and critical engagement with real-world business issues. This is particularly notable in the use of case study analysis, consultancy-style projects, and reflective practice. The moderation processes are thorough, well documented, and transparently applied. Marking is fair, consistent, and in line with sector expectations. Classification decisions are sound and clearly based on academic merit.

2. Provision of Professional Services The professional and administrative support provided to both students and academic teams is of a very high standard. Communications from the programme team have been clear, timely, and constructive throughout the year. The responsiveness to external examiner queries and the provision of documentation for review have been exemplary. From a student perspective, there is ample evidence of an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Students benefit from high-quality digital learning resources, accessible tutor support, and structured academic guidance. In particular, the integration of careers support and personal development planning into the programme structure is commendable. It supports not only academic success but also employability and leadership development. The programme demonstrates strong employer and practitioner engagement, which further enhances the student experience. Guest lectures, industry case studies, and external project opportunities enrich the curriculum and ensure the MBA retains real-world relevance. In summary, the Bloomsbury MBA provision reflects a mature, high-quality academic offer underpinned by strong professional support services and a clear commitment to student success and progression. Recommendation: I have no reservations in confirming that the Bloomsbury MBA programmes meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. I commend the team for their commitment to academic excellence and student-centred delivery.

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC STANDARDS	
Please provide feedback on academic standards	
<p>If you have examined any of the degree apprenticeship programmes, please provide detailed comments on the programme delivery and its alignment with QAA Degree Apprenticeship Characteristics Statement with specific reference to learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p><a href="#">Characteristics Statement - Higher Education in Apprenticeships</a></p>	Not Applicable
<p>If the programme(s) being examined are accredited/regulated/endorsed by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), were the academic standards of the programme in line with the PSRB requirements.</p>	Yes
<p>Please detail how the academic standards were not in line with the PSRB requirements.</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i></p>	

SECTION 3 – THE STANDARDS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE	
<p>Were the standards of student academic performance (and where applicable, professional competence) comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK Higher Education institutions with which you are familiar?</p>	Yes
<p>Do students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level?</p>	Yes

### SECTION 3 – THE STANDARDS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

<p><b>Please provide a detailed summary of your findings in relation to student performance.</b></p>	<p>The performance of students across the Bloomsbury MBA programmes during this academic cycle has been of a consistently high standard, reflecting both the academic quality of the provision and the engagement of the student cohort. The work reviewed demonstrates that students are achieving the intended learning outcomes and performing well in assessments that require critical thinking, applied knowledge, and strategic insight. Students have shown a strong grasp of key business and management theories, with many able to contextualise and apply these frameworks effectively within real-world scenarios. In particular, modules focusing on leadership, organisational strategy, and entrepreneurship have yielded assignments that combine theoretical depth with thoughtful practical application. Many students produce work that is reflective and professionally informed, often drawing on their own business contexts and international perspectives. Performance is particularly commendable in areas requiring independent research, critical evaluation, and the synthesis of complex ideas. There is evidence of students engaging with a wide range of academic and practitioner sources, suggesting strong research and analytical capabilities. The standard of written communication is generally excellent, with well-structured arguments and clear articulation of ideas. There is a healthy distribution of grades across the full marking spectrum, with a number of students achieving distinctions through work of a particularly high calibre. At the same time, the programme provides effective support for those needing further development, as evidenced by improvement between modules and the quality of feedback received. Overall, student performance across the MBA programmes is indicative of a well-managed and intellectually stimulating learning environment. The level of achievement is fully appropriate for postgraduate study, and in many cases exceeds expectations. The programme team is to be congratulated for fostering such strong academic outcomes across a diverse and professionally experienced student body.</p>
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### SECTION 4 – A RELEVANT CURRICULUM

<p><b>How well does the programme equip students for future employment in the profession/sector?</b></p>	<p>Very well</p>
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## SECTION 4 – A RELEVANT CURRICULUM

**Please provide detailed feedback in relation to the currency and relevance of the curriculum and employability of graduates in the profession/sector.**

The curriculum across the Bloomsbury MBA programmes is highly relevant, contemporary, and clearly designed to meet the evolving needs of both students and employers. It offers a strong balance between theoretical foundations, applied business knowledge, and the development of practical, work-ready skills. This ensures that students are well equipped to succeed in a competitive and fast-changing global employment market. The modules are carefully structured to reflect key areas of modern business practice, including leadership, strategic management, innovation, finance, and digital transformation. The inclusion of themes such as sustainability, ethical decision-making, and global business trends further enhances the currency and forward-thinking nature of the programme. What stands out particularly is the programme's strong emphasis on practical application. Students are regularly required to apply concepts to real-world scenarios through case studies, simulations, consultancy-style assessments, and project-based learning. This supports the development of problem-solving, critical thinking, and strategic decision-making skills—highly valued attributes in today's professional environment. Employability is clearly embedded within the curriculum. Students are encouraged to reflect on their professional identity, leadership style, and career development goals throughout the programme. Support for career planning is evident both within modules and through the wider provision of careers and professional development services. The programme's close links with industry and practice—through guest speakers, practitioner-led sessions, and real business problems—add further value to the student experience. Graduates leave with not only a strong academic qualification but also enhanced confidence, resilience, and the ability to make an immediate contribution in the workplace. In summary, the MBA curriculum is highly relevant, professionally grounded, and strategically designed to foster graduate employability. It prepares students not only to respond to current business challenges, but to lead and innovate within them.

## SECTION 5 – ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

**Please confirm if the following assessment expectations have been met:**

Assessment practices were appropriate in relation to the programme(s) and/or module(s) and their intended learning outcomes.	Agree
Assessment processes were sufficiently rigorous.	Agree
The standard of marking applied by internal examiners was sufficient to assess student performance against appropriate standards.	Agree
Assessment processes were clear and fair for students.	Agree

SECTION 5 – ASSESSMENT PRACTICE		
	Assessments were fairly conducted within institutional regulations.	Agree
<p>Please provide detailed feedback relating to assessment strategies and practice, noting any areas for development and observed good practice.</p>	<p>The assessment strategies employed across the Bloomsbury MBA programmes are robust, varied, and closely aligned to the intended learning outcomes at postgraduate level. They reflect a clear commitment to academic integrity, inclusivity, and the development of both intellectual and practical competencies. Assessments are thoughtfully designed to challenge students to demonstrate critical thinking, synthesis of complex ideas, and the application of theory to practice. A wide range of formats is utilised, including case study analyses, strategic reports, reflective essays, group presentations, and applied projects. This diversity allows students to engage with assessment in ways that reflect real-world business demands, while also catering to different learning styles. There is strong evidence of constructive alignment across the curriculum: the tasks set are appropriately pitched at Level 7, and the marking criteria are transparent and well understood by both staff and students. Rubrics are used effectively to ensure consistency in marking and to guide students on what is expected at each grade level. Importantly, assessments support the development of transferable skills that are vital in leadership and management roles, such as problem-solving, communication, strategic thinking, and evidence-based decision-making. The inclusion of reflective components in many assessments is also commendable, encouraging students to think critically about their own professional development. Feedback on assessed work is detailed, timely, and formative in nature. In the samples reviewed, feedback was well-aligned with the marking criteria and offered valuable guidance for future improvement. The internal moderation process is clearly embedded and supports fairness, consistency, and quality assurance. Overall, the assessment strategy across the MBA programmes is well-conceived and professionally delivered. It provides students with a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate their learning, build confidence in their capabilities, and graduate with skills directly applicable to the contemporary workplace.</p>	

SECTION 6 – LEARNING AND TEACHING		
Please confirm if the following expectations have been met:		
	Assessment feedback made reference to the learning outcomes.	Strongly Agree
	Assessment feedback identified opportunities for improvement.	Strongly Agree

## SECTION 6 – LEARNING AND TEACHING

Please provide detailed feedback on the appropriateness of the learning and teaching strategies, the quality of feedback provision, and the extent to which these enabled students to achieve their learning outcomes and meet the set standards.

The learning and teaching strategies adopted across the Bloomsbury MBA programmes are highly appropriate for postgraduate study and are clearly designed to foster critical thinking, applied knowledge, and reflective professional practice. They reflect a student-centred and inclusive approach, underpinned by a strong commitment to academic excellence and real-world relevance. Teaching is structured to support active engagement with complex business issues, encouraging students to critically interrogate theory and apply it to contemporary practice. A blended learning model is effectively employed, combining synchronous and asynchronous teaching, digital resources, and interactive tasks that allow for flexibility while maintaining academic rigour. There is clear evidence of experiential learning throughout the programme, with students regularly engaging in case-based analysis, simulations, live projects, and collaborative problem-solving. This ensures that theoretical learning is consistently contextualised within real-world scenarios, helping students to develop leadership, analytical, and decision-making skills. The use of diverse teaching formats—including workshops, seminars, guest lectures, and practitioner-led sessions—contributes significantly to student engagement. These approaches not only enrich the curriculum but also ensure that students are exposed to current business thinking and global perspectives. Peer learning and group activities are used to good effect, fostering team-working and cross-cultural collaboration. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the pedagogic needs of MBA students, many of whom bring significant professional experience. Teaching is tailored accordingly, promoting critical dialogue and encouraging students to draw upon their own workplace contexts to enhance classroom discussion. Overall, the learning and teaching strategies in place are highly effective in promoting deep learning and professional development. They align well with the programme aims and the needs of a diverse, international student body. The approach is dynamic, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating—creating an environment in which students can thrive both academically and professionally.

## SECTION 7 – ASSESSMENT BOARDS

For the Assessment Board(s) you attended, was the conduct of the Assessment Board professional and did it follow procedure?

Yes



## SECTION 7 – ASSESSMENT BOARDS

<p><b>Please provide any additional comments or feedback relating to the conduct of Assessment Boards.</b></p>	<p>The conduct of the assessment boards for the Bloomsbury MBA programmes has been exemplary, demonstrating professionalism, academic integrity, and full compliance with institutional regulations and sector best practice. The boards were well-organised, efficiently chaired, and supported by clear documentation, allowing for informed and transparent decision-making. Academic and administrative staff came well-prepared, with a thorough understanding of the assessment regulations and procedures. There was clear evidence of robust internal moderation processes having been undertaken prior to the board, and any queries raised were dealt with in a clear and consistent manner. The handling of borderline cases and extenuating circumstances was both fair and compassionate, ensuring that student outcomes were considered holistically and in line with institutional policy. Student performance data was clearly presented, and classification decisions were well justified. The board created space for open discussion where appropriate, while maintaining focus and discipline throughout the process. From an external examiner's perspective, I felt that my role was welcomed and that my input was valued. The transparency of the process and the professionalism of all involved give confidence in the quality assurance mechanisms that underpin the award of MBA qualifications.</p>
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## SECTION 8 – ENHANCEMENT AND INNOVATION

<p><b>Please highlight examples of best practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment, including any commendations.</b></p>	<p>Constructive Alignment Strong alignment between learning outcomes, assessment tasks, and marking criteria ensures academic coherence and clarity for students. Diverse and Authentic Assessment Methods Use of a wide variety of assessment types (e.g., case studies, consultancy projects, reflective reports) reflects real-world business challenges and supports different learning styles. Detailed, Developmental Feedback Feedback is consistently comprehensive, constructive, and timely—clearly guiding students on areas for improvement and further development. Industry-Relevant Curriculum The curriculum is highly contemporary, addressing emerging global business trends and embedding employability and leadership development throughout.</p>
<p><b>Please note any recommendations you would like to make to enhance the quality and standards of provision below.</b></p>	<p>No recommendations</p>



<b>SECTION 9 – COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS (if applicable)</b>		
Select the partner which the following feedback will relate to.		["Bloomsbury Institute"]
	Please provide any partner specific feedback that you have not already covered in any of the previous questions in this report.	Please refer to the full report
Select the partner which the following feedback will relate to (if applicable).		
	Please provide any partner specific feedback that you have not already covered in any of the previous questions in this report.	
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<b>SECTION 9 – COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS (if applicable)</b>	
<p>If you have more partner institutions to provide feedback on, please use the space to the right.</p> <p>Please ensure you clearly identify the name of the partner site your feedback relates to.</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i></p>	

<b>SECTION 10 – ANNUAL REPORT CHECKLIST</b>	
This section provides confirmation that you have received sufficient evidence and support to fulfil your role.	
Did you receive sufficient evidence to enable you to fulfil your role as an External Examiner?	Yes
<p>Please provide details as to why the evidence was not sufficient and if the matter was resolved.</p> <p><i>(If applicable)</i></p>	
Did you have adequate time to consider samples of work and contribute to examination boards?	Yes
<p>Please provide details as to why you did not have adequate time and if the matter was resolved.</p> <p><i>(If applicable)</i></p>	
If you are an Examiner of a programme that is delivered in a language other than Welsh and English, have you verified the translation of ALL assessment briefs and exam papers which contribute to the award?	Not applicable

## SECTION 10 – ANNUAL REPORT CHECKLIST

This section provides confirmation that you have received sufficient evidence and support to fulfil your role.

Please confirm whether the recommendations raised in your previous report have been, or are being, considered and addressed to your satisfaction.	Not applicable (first report or as no recommendations raised in previous report)
Please provide details of any progress towards addressing the recommendations raised in the previous annual report.	
If you have acted as a mentor to new External Examiners, or have been allocated a mentor this academic year, please provide feedback on how this process could be improved. <i>(if applicable)</i>	NA
Please provide any feedback that you wish to make that has not already been covered in any of the previous questions in this report. <i>(if applicable)</i>	NA

## SECTION 11 – EXIT REPORT (FINAL YEAR)

Only complete this section if this is your final term in office

Please comment on any significant changes in standards over your term in office and/or any other recommendations which you feel appropriate, and which may assist your successor.	NA
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## SECTION 12 - DECLARATION

Please confirm that the information I have provided in this report is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.	I confirm
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**RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

Name of External Examiner:	██████████
WU Faculty:	Robert Leigh
Programme/s examined (if specific modules please specify):	MBA
Name of programme leader:	Pooja Gupta
Collaborative partners (if applicable)	Bloomsbury Institute London
Period of report:	2024/25
Date of report:	4 <sup>th</sup> September
Date of response:	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear ██████████,

Thank you for your thorough analysis and highly positive feedback on the Bloomsbury MBA programmes. We greatly appreciate your confirmation that the academic standards are fully appropriate for Level 7, with robust assessment strategies, constructive feedback practices, and strong alignment between learning outcomes and assessments.

We are pleased that you highlighted the intellectual challenge across modules, the relevance of the curriculum, and the balance of theory with practical application through case studies, consultancy projects, and reflective practice. Your recognition of the supportive learning environment, careers integration, and industry engagement is also most encouraging.

We are particularly heartened by your comments on student performance, noting their ability to apply critical thinking, research, and professional insights to real-world contexts, which reflects both the quality of provision and the engagement of our student body.

Your commendation of our academic and professional support, alongside the rigour and transparency of our assessment processes, provides valuable assurance. We remain committed to maintaining these high standards and will continue to follow best practice while seeking opportunities for further enhancement.

Signed:

**Pooja Gupta**  
**Course Leader**

Signed:

**Associate Dean / Principal Lecturer (for home and franchised provision) or Academic Link (for validated provision only)**