

The University of Leeds**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2011– 2012

Part A: General Information**Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Biological Sciences
Subject(s):	Human Physiology
Programme(s) / Module(s):	
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

Completed report

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk.

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Academic Quality and Standards**
Academic Quality and Standards Team
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards**Matters for Urgent Attention**

If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box

N/A

Only applicable in first year of appointment

Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?

N/A

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School

N/A

Standards**1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award**

- The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

The structure and content of the programme and the methods and criteria for assessment appear entirely appropriate for the award.

2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

In my experience the programme and ILOs are comparable to those at my own institution and at other Universities where I have examined in the UK.

3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
- *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

The methods of assessment appear to be appropriate and the marking standard is comparable to that I have seen at other Universities. Overall, the students appear to be happy with their experience in Leeds. There had been some student concerns regarding inconsistency amongst tutors for small groups, which had been recognised and is being addressed by the course organisers.

4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
- *The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

The new course appears to be running smoothly. I was able to meet with student representatives in the Spring of 2012 and student satisfaction appears generally high. One of the strengths of the final year of the course is that it gives students the opportunity to develop intellectually and take ownership of their programme of work study. By offering a wide choice, the Advanced Topics module allows students to study the topics which interest them the most but does not restrict them to a set number. Whilst students are required to answer examination questions on only two topics, the best students are not limited and can take advantage of studying a wider range of material delivered by research active staff. The student projects offer a similar scope to allow the best to shine.

5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

N/A

6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.

The programme seems to be working well, standards are being maintained and the student experience is generally positive. The staff at Leeds are doing a good job in straightened circumstances.

7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching

This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.

The Advanced Topics module in the final year is an excellent example of research led teaching. Research active staff deliver lectures at the cutting edge of their research. There is an excellent choice of topics. The core teaching provides a platform for students to study in further depth, the topics that engage them the most and to hone their intellectual skills to make a critical evaluation of the field,

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements

N/A

9. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.

- *Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

I was provided with comprehensive booklet regarding the role of External examiners

10. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes

11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

I was provided with draft of all papers and invited to comment.

12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?

I was given the opportunity to access all student scripts and dissertations. The marking process was transparent. Model answers were provided. Many scripts had been double marked to ensure consistency across questions.

13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

There was a very wide choice of topics. The best students achieved an extremely high standard commensurate with the best I have seen at other universities in the UK. I sampled work across the whole spectrum of marks and was felt that the standard of marking was appropriate.

14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?

The administration was extremely efficient both throughout the year and over the period I visited Leeds after the examination period. I would like to congratulate those involved.

15. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?

Yes. This year there had been several requests for mitigation, which I was asked to look at. The profile of each student was made available to me, in addition to their scripts. I also had ample opportunity to discuss the mitigation with the programme lead. It is clear that staff take such requests for mitigation from students very seriously and the process is fair. If required, students are offered feedback to explain why their mitigation has failed, which is good practice.

Other comments

Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form



3 October 2012

Dear

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2011/12: BSc Human Physiology

We are very grateful for your input over the last year and as before, I'm pleased that you found our administrative and support processes efficient. I am also pleased that one strength of the programme you identify is the breadth and research-based approach of the final year advanced topic modules (ATMs), which as notes, have been expanded to include more topics relevant to Human Physiology students this year. Following up from last year, thankfully our efforts to mitigate for the disparity in assessment of the ATMs seen last year, has been successful.

You mention in your report about student concerns regarding consistency of tutor marking which presumably arises from the assessment of work such as practical reports, marked by a student's personal tutor. While it is standard practice to carry out statistical analysis on marks from multiple markers to identify those at the extremes, notes in response that this issue will be investigated in greater depth.

Regarding expansion of Physiology-based modules, I was very pleased that and were successful in gaining funding from the Physiological Society to help create a new level 1 module on Human Physiology at the Extremes. I'm sure this will really engage students and enhance their experience.

Thanks once again for your efforts during the year and I look forward to seeing you in April next year. If you have any queries, please let me know.

With best wishes,

Faculty Director of Undergraduate Student Education

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External Examiner:

Programme Area: **BSc Human Physiology**

Academic Year: **2011/12**

Date of Response: **21.08.2012**

Dear

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2011/12: BSc Human Physiology

Firstly, as Programme Leader I would like to thank you for your input throughout the 2011-12 academic year and for the end-of-year programme report which has been read with interest. We are pleased that no areas of serious concern for urgent action were identified. We appreciate your positive comments on the efficiency of the examination process and the support that you got from our UG administration team, especially

You also note that 'the structure and content of the programme and the methods and criteria for assessment are appropriate for this award' and that our degree programme and its associated intended learning outcomes compare well with those offered by other institutions in the UK where you have examined. Your positive comments in relation to elements within our programme such as the extended library/laboratory projects and the relatively new 'Advanced Topics' module recognizes and acknowledges the work that has been put in by our academics in order to realize the goal of a strong research-led degree programme despite loss of expertise and academic staff within FBS. Last year the point was made by some of our students that there were insufficient Physiology options within the Advanced Topics and this year saw the introduction of two new topics, 'Fertility and Reproduction' and 'Cardio-renal syndrome' were very well received by the students.

We are pleased that during your face-to-face meetings with students across Levels 1-3 they reported overall a high level of satisfaction with their experience at Leeds. Their comments in relation to some inconsistency across different tutor groups will be followed up upon and, if necessary, appropriate actions will be taken to ensure that all students get good support within the tutorials. Although this was not explicitly mentioned in your report, during our informal discussion you commented on the need to retain distinctiveness within the Human Physiology programme and we feel that the introduction of the new Level 1 'Extreme Human Physiology' module with a linked open-access learning resource will provide our students with a more solid introduction to some key concepts in Physiology at an early stage in their studies.

The BSc in Human Physiology continues to be a popular programme attracting students with strong A-level grades. Our aim is to deliver a world class research-led programme and your continued input in the coming years will ensure that we deliver on these fronts. On behalf of all the staff connected with the Human Physiology programme I would like to thank you for your input as our External Examiner.

Yours sincerely,

Programme Leader