

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2010– 2011

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION*Subject area and awards being examined:*

School of: Faculty of Biological Sciences	Subject(s): Sports Science/Physiology/Biomechanics
Programme(s) / Module(s): Sport and Exercise Sciences Programmes	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) BSc

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than 6 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.

None

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?

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.

It has been a pleasure to work with the staff of the School over my time as External Examiner. It is clear that they have taken note of my comments and where possible and appropriate have made changes that I believe have improved procedures and increased standards (that is not to say standards were anything other than very high when I arrived). Initially, I did have some concerns about the marking of final year projects but as I leave I am happy that project marking is now very fair and use of the revised marking proforma is consistent. The grading of each section of the final report on this proforma now tallies much better with the markers views, expressed in their written comments and the final grades awarded. Project

work here is as good as any I have seen as an External Examiner in any other UK institution and considerably better than most. The range of work is impressive and the interaction with staff at the cutting edge of their respective fields of research is commendable. Feedback to students on their project and other modules is consistently very good and more to the point helpful to the student. Both strengths and weaknesses in the student's work are clearly highlighted. It is clear that staff work very hard on this aspect of their teaching.

My experience is that the systems in place within the School that are used to monitor quality are robust and that staff take quality control very seriously. They spend a great deal of time on this and have developed sensible and efficient mechanisms to monitor performance.

These are challenging times in HE but the School has managed to maintain quality at a very high level despite, in my opinion, a cripplingly high student:staff ratio. As I understand it student applications are up, entry requirements are increased, research productivity and income have risen but SSR has altered very little in my time as External Examiner. This places a considerable strain on staff which I believe cannot continue for too much longer, without risking unfortunate consequences for the excellent programme run by the School. I do hope that the University does not kill the goose that is laying so many golden eggs.

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 ILOs are appropriate and in general the standards expected are as they should be for the award of a BSc.

- 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.*

The aims and ILOs are similar to those of my institution.

- 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.*

A range of methods are used, all of which are appropriate to the level at which they are used.

- 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.*

Yes they have ample opportunity to do this. Standards are very comparable to those here at Birmingham. In my experience of External Examining at 6 other Universities standards at Leeds are as high as any I have come across.

- 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. 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.

- 7. 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.

I said the following in 2009-10 "This is clearly shown in the wide range and novelty of the final year project work which the students undertake. This could not happen without the research experience and continued engagement with research by the staff. There is also a clear trickle-down effect from the research activity of staff into their teaching at all levels". Again this year I was struck by this influence of staff interests in driving module content and development.

The Examination Process

8. **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.*

It was. I cannot praise highly enough the organisation of the wide range of material that was available to me

9. **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?**

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

Yes.

10. **Was sufficient assessed/examination work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?**

"I had access to everything that I needed. This was presented in a highly efficient manner. I would like to offer my thanks to the administrative team, they are to be congratulated on doing such a thoroughly professional job, as ever." I said this last year, I can only repeat myself.

11. **Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes, once again a highly professional Board, with excellent administrative support. I know that this was a team effort but it is exceptional in my experience to come across such an efficient and well organised operation.

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

Yes, there was an extensive list of candidates applying for mitigation all were treated fairly and with due care and attention.

For Examiners involved in Mentoring Arrangements

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

Other Comments

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

It has been a pleasure to be an External Examiner over the last four years. I have always felt welcome and my comments have been listened to and acted upon. I have already noted several times above how professional the whole approach is in the School but I cannot help but say it again!

External Examiner:

Programme Area: **BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences**

Academic Year: **2010/11**

Date of Response: **18th July, 2011**

Dear

The Sports and Exercise Science team would like to thank you for your exceptionally positive comments regarding both the standards and the procedures used to ensure these within our degree programmes. We have worked exceptionally hard over your time as external examiner to overcome any issues regarding parity between discipline groups in the marking of undergraduate projects and are delighted that you leave your position confident that we are fair and consistent. We have really appreciated the time and effort that you have given to this particular issue, especially as you have always felt that the standard, range, novelty and research lead nature of the projects has been exemplary. Likewise we are very pleased that our chief external examiner regards our feedback procedures so highly, especially in the light of the sector wide concentration on this issue.

We very much appreciate you highlighting the perennial issue of the student staff ratio in Sport and Exercise Sciences. Indeed, we have seen our research income and research output increase substantially since the last RAE, whilst we have maintained a top six position in teaching league tables (e.g. the Guardian), as pointed out in your external examiner report have maintained exceptionally high professional standards in quality assurance and have been able to increase our student admission criteria. This balance of improved research environment and learning and teaching quality has been undertaken with no change in the high SSR and has taken its toll on staff. It is thus a huge morale boost for staff to receive such distinctive comments from our outgoing external examiner.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank you for all of your hard work and diligence throughout your tenure ship as external examiner. We strongly believe that you have played a large part in producing the quality teaching programmes we have within our Centre today.

Yours sincerely,

Examinations Officer

Faculty of Biological Sciences

University of Leeds
Garstang Building
Leeds LS2 9JT



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

26 September 2011

Dear

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2010/11: BSc Sport Science and Physiology

Many thanks for all your efforts throughout your four year tenure as External Examiner for the Sports Science and Physiology degree programmes - we are very grateful for your input and support. The changes implemented have significantly improved the programme and the student experience. It is great to see the hard work of staff reflected in the positive comments included in your report.

As you state in your report, the Centre has made great progress in increasing research activity under extremely difficult conditions recently and maintaining excellence in student education in the face of a high SSR is an outstanding achievement to be commended. Initiatives planned at Faculty level will hopefully go some way to addressing these issues in the future.

I am glad you found administrative and support processes of a high standard during your tenure- staff will be very encouraged by your comments.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Faculty Director of Undergraduate Student Education