

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 / Centre for Sport & Exercise Sciences	Subject(s):
Programme(s) / Module(s): SPSC1031 Motor Control: Foundations of Learning SPSC1216 Intro to Psychology SPSC2031 Motor Control: Learning Environment SPSC2114 Applied & Social Psychology of Sport 1 SPSC2240 Human Motor Development SPSC2305 Drugs in Sport SPSC2308 Motor Control 2 SPSC2307 Motor Control SPSC3032 Motor Control: Research Issues SPSC3211 Land, Water & Air Based Activities SPSC3318 Exercise & Psychological Health SPSC3327 Contemporary Perspectives in Sport Psychology	awards: (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc.) BSc Sport & Exercise Sciences BSc Sports Science (Outdoor Activities) BSc Sports Science in Relation to Medicine BSc Sports Science and Physiology

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?

Yes.

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.

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 Learning Outcomes are fully commensurate with each level. Specifically, there is progression from familiarity with concepts and demonstrating core competencies at Level 1 to demonstrating a broader range of conceptual understanding and range of competencies at Level 2 to deploying a range of critical analysis skills and conducting an extended project / dissertation at Level 3.

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.*

As above- the ILOs at each level are consistent with the expectation of progression from description to critical analysis. More broadly, the programmes embrace more than two of the five study areas set out in the QAA benchmark statements for Sport Programmes. The course descriptors specify Biosciences benchmark "adapted to be appropriate to Sport and Exercise Sciences programmes, incorporating elements of the benchmark for Hospitality, Sport, Leisure and Tourism." I find the latter to be more applicable.

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 variety of assessments were used at each level and these were appropriate for the specified ILOs of each module. Assessment is rigorous and, overall, the quality and amount of feedback is very good. There is a good balance between critical comments and suggestions for how the student can improve in future submissions. Turn-around time also appears excellent as does communication of timelines for assessment to students. It would be helpful for me to see information on the moderation process.

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 work of students is comparable with other institutions with which I am familiar, with some excellent work at the top end. There seems to be an early emphasis on critical analysis of research- this is both commendable and appreciated by the students I met. I am sure early development of critical research skills helps the better students to excel in their final year project.

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

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.

This is difficult to comment as it is my first year as external examiner. I can only say that the team have made several changes in response to issues highlighted in previous years as well as changes in personnel. It has been a challenging time, particularly in provision for Sport Psychology, and the teaching team have worked hard to ensure these elements of the programme run smoothly.

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.

The feedback I received from students I met on 3 March was consistent in highlighting the research-led nature of the degree. They appreciated and had a genuine interest in many of the research areas of staff and engaged in critical analysis of research papers from early in the course. There were examples of work in the final year dissertation that had real practical significance (e.g., studies using spinal cord injury participants) and it was probably no coincidence that much of this work was excellent.

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.*

The material I received was sufficient and there was excellent attention to detail from the administrative team. This made my job far easier in looking through the work on campus. I received appropriate samples of both coursework and examination scripts together with module summary data. I was sent a sample of dissertations in plenty of time prior to my visit. In addition, a computer was set up on which I could access further module data on the day of my visit. Overall- the work of the teaching and administrative team in facilitating my role was outstanding.

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?

Yes.

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

Yes- excellent.

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

Yes.

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.

Other Comments

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

These are very well run courses- the lack of full-time staff (notably in psychology) has presented a challenge for the team and they have done very well to ensure these modules are delivered to a good standard. My recollection is that steps are being taken to address this and I think this is important to maintaining the quality of student experience in this subject area on a long-term basis.

assessors cannot agree a mark a third assessor will act as moderator. If the third assessors mark is within 10% of one of the initial assessors the final mark is the average of the two closest marks. If the third assessors mark is equidistant from the original assessors all three marks are averaged.

Finally, 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 external examiner.

Thank you for all of your hard work and diligence throughout this year as external examiner. We very much appreciate the time and effort this involves.

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 and Exercise Sciences

Firstly, many thanks for agreeing to act in the role of External Examiner for the Sports and Exercise Sciences degree programme and for your effort throughout the year - we are very grateful for your input and I'm pleased that you found our administrative and support processes efficient. It is great to see the hard work of staff reflected in the positive comments you have regarding the programme.

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 see from your response to your report that it includes information of current moderation processes as implementing full double blind marking of examination scripts across the Faculty would not be possible. For the coming session, we aim to moderate at least 20% of all examination scripts including all failed scripts and we are also currently working on giving staff more guidance on assigning marks below 40%.

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