

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

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

Faculty / School of:	Biological Sciences/Centre for Sport and Exercise Sciences
Subject(s):	<i>Centre for Sport and Exercise Sciences</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Sport Science and Physiology Sport Science and Physiology (industrial; international) Sport and Exercise Sciences Sport Science in Relation to Medicine Integrated Masters (sport Science and Physiology)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**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 Quality Assurance**
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

Due to ill health I was unable to attend the final Award Board. Despite this I visited the University and met with students in March, I reviewed final year project work and via electronic communication was able to review student work, make comments and oversee a range of module data/proforma.

On this basis the Admin, Academic and Faculty staff have been extremely professional, helpful and timely to the point I feel I have still been able to fulfil my role for the University, Centre and their students.

I came across no issues for urgent attention.

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?

NA

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

Staff within the Centre (Academic and Administration) have been helpful, open, honest and have engaged me in a high quality of debate about all aspects of their academic offering.

Over the period of my appointment there have been changes, additions, reflection on the Course provision that have always been generated by open and high quality debate. The staff are pro-active as well as responsive and the detailed responses to

my comments and reports are very informative and helpful to me. Clearly the Course provision and various aspects of teaching and learning were of a very high standard when I started and much of what has happened in the last 4 years has been refinement and quality enhancement.

I have found students and staff eloquent and clear in their approach to high quality provision and it is nice to see staff response to constructive comments from students.

Staff have responded positively to all comments about content and structure and in specific areas feedback on assessment type, loading and student skill development has been received positively. Students see and appreciate these efforts.

Overall the Centre and its courses are in excellent health and well set-up to the forthcoming challenges for Sport and Exercise Science in the general academic sphere.

To my mind the standard at the University of Leeds are as good if not better than all Sport Science courses I have seen over the last 10 years of external examiner work around the country.

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 programme aims and ILO's were clear and appropriately linked to content. I can confirm they are commensurate with the level of the award.
As in previous years the standards of award and award element were entirely appropriate.

- 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.*

I can confirm, again, there is no concern from this External Examiner with respect to Aims and ILO's in regards of national standing and available benchmarking.

- 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.*

I can confirm the appropriateness of the design and structure of assessment methods, the marking and quality oversight as well as the classification of awards.
I debated with students and staff (throughout the year and in an earlier visit in March) about specific minor issues. These were all dealt with in a timely and professional manner.
Students attest to the quality of teaching and support provided on the course. Student performance at higher end is excellent and supports clear delivery, effective learning and assessment strategies and a general approach to T+L that draws the best out of the students.

- 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.*

Please see comments above. Again students have, as in previous years, been provided with ample and interesting opportunities to demonstrate achievement of aims and ILO's. The assessment diet is appropriate, varied, developmental and overall well designed for the students.

- 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.

Staff responded appropriately to minor comments for students and external examiners in the past 12 months. There have been significant attempts to look at balancing the timetable of assessments across the year as well as developing key academic skills through appropriate assessment plans (e.g. a process of developing scientific writing).

The assessment that included elements of material for public engagement was noted and was both interesting and able to differentiate high quality student effort from average and poor achievement levels.

- 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 Centre staff have just had an excellent REF and it is clear that virtually all elements of research in the centre permeate the curriculum. This is most notable in final year dissertations and the ones I saw/read were clearly aligned to staff expertise and interest. This is cutting edge work and student exposure and engagement with this is of benefit.

- 8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

N/A

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

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

Although I have agreed to mentor a new External Examiner I have yet to formally meet <> (not helped by my recent illness). However, we have been in contact via e-mail and a line of communication is open for any support or discussion that is necessary. Thank you to the Centre staff for setting this up.

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. 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.

As in previous years there is no problem with information flow and I felt I could effectively dispense my duties.

11. 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 all relevant documents, assessments and Xcel spreadsheets of module performance were sent on-line.

12. 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 had ample material to view in an appropriate timeframe and despite my illness was able to contribute formally and, hopefully, in a valuable way to the assessment and review process.

13. 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?

Again, as in previous years this was appropriate and a significant amount of work was reviewed on-line and at the March visit to be comfortable with my reflections on the standard of students work,

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

Yes I saw work in the physiological domain as well as in motor control. I read excellent project work that was akin to a first draft of a publication. Students clearly could engage and demonstrate high levels of knowledge and achievement. I also saw some at the bottom end of the marks range and whilst disappointing they did reflect reality in HE and the marks/feedback were spot-on.

15. 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 admin arrangements were very helpful and reflective of my health issues. I thank UoL staff, especially <>, as I could make a solid contribution despite being unable to attend the Board. I assume, as in previous years, that the Board went ahead and was completed in an entirely professional manner.

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

I assume so – although I could not attend the Board- these were clearly documented on Xcel spreadsheets I did get to see.

Other comments

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

My thanks to the Centre staff and in particular <>, <>, <>, <> and <>.

The courses are in good health. Staff are proactive and responsive and operate in a collegiate and professional manner. Students value their staff and courses and understand the efforts undertaken to optimise their learning.

I wish all staff and students good luck for the future and thank you for making me welcome in Leeds.

Faculty of Biological Sciences
Student Education Service

Irene Manton Building
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT, UK



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

8 October 2015

Dear

RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2014/15
BSc Sports Science and Physiology – all programme variants
BSc Sports Science in Relation to Medicine
MBiol, BSc Sports Science and Physiology (Integrated Masters) – all programme variants

On behalf of the Sport and Exercise Sciences teaching team and the support staff who contribute to the successful operation of our programmes, our sincere thanks for your contributions to the development of our courses and your incredibly positive comments. We are very proud of our programmes and continuously strive to enhance them, it is nice to see you recognise this proactive stance and I will of course pass on your thanks to the administrative staff as well as the teaching staff for the support you have received as external examiner.

It was unfortunate you were not able to attend the final award board. I hope you are recovered now. Thank you for reviewing the work and your complimentary and reassuring comments on our marking and dealing with issues as they arose. Essentially all seemed to go well and your positive comments leave me with little to respond to other than offer our thanks.

Thank you again for all you have contributed to in promoting the development and ensuring the highest of standards in our programmes.

Best wishes,

Examinations Officer

Tel:
Email:

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014– 2015

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

Faculty / School of:	Biological Sciences
Subject(s):	<i>Sport and Exercise Sciences</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Biomechanics and Psychology Modules across; Sport and Exercise Sciences Sports Science and Physiology Sports Science in Relation to Medicine
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc

Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner**Completed report**

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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

Not Applicable

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?

The reports were provided but not the response

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

Not Applicable

Standards

- 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 for the programme and modules are commensurate with the level of award. The quality of the programme is very good. The structure and content provides appropriate depth and breadth and there is very good progression throughout the 3 years.

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 standards and achievements of students across all years of the programme are comparable with those at other institutions with which I am familiar. In accordance with the FHEQ, the standards set for the programme are appropriate across all three years of the programmes

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 programmes utilise a variety of methods to assess the ILOs of each module. Whilst the methods used at level 1 allow the students to achieve quite high marks, the marks awarded for level 3 seem relatively low to me and I wonder if this may be due to some of the differences in the methods used compared to level 2. An example of this is in biomechanics where MCQs are used at both level 1 and 2. I appreciate the limited staff resource and assume this is one reason for the extensive use of MCQs but this perhaps does not prepare students fully for the assessment methods used at level 3. I think the students would benefit from alternative assessment methods at level 2. The learning and teaching methods experienced by students appear to be very appropriate for the programme. The student performance is generally very good with some exceptional students

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 assessment methods allowed students to demonstrate their achievements of the aims and ILOs of the modules and the achievements of the students across all years of the programme is comparable with those at other institutions with which I am familiar. The students at the top end demonstrated the ability to critically appraise the relevant literature but this was not the case for students lower down. Unlike with a number of other institutions with which I am familiar, there were only few failures and no long tail on the modules I looked at.

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.

N/A

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.

Research seems to be heavily embedded within the programmes. The research active staff keep the curriculum current and the research project module at level 3 allows the students to fully engage in the undertaking of experimental research.

8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD

N/A

For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements

9. 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

The Examination/Assessment Process

10. 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 provided was sufficient for me to act effectively as an external examiner

11. 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.

I received all relevant documentation at the very start of my tenure.

12. 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 given the opportunity to comment on all draft examination papers. I considered the nature and level of the questions to be appropriate and only had minor comments for the team.

13. 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?

Samples for all modules I am responsible were provided enabling me to have confidence in the evaluation of the standard of work. All the scripts were clearly marked and annotated although the level of this (both in terms of quantity and quality) differed within and between modules. Clear evidence of second marking / moderating demonstrated a transparent and rigorous process.

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

The choice of subjects for dissertations was very appropriate. The differences between the experimental studies and the critical / systematic reviews raises slight concerns about parity. Whilst the written reports seem equitable in terms of quantity and quality of writing, the work required for the experimental studies seems to outweigh that for the reviews. Whilst I fully understand why the different types of project are offered (and commend the team for this) I think the team should consider whether an additional element to the critical reviews is warranted.

15. 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?

All arrangements for the process were very satisfactory. The Board of Examiners (which I attended) was conducted fairly and efficiently. <>, in particular, was excellent in all aspects of the process.

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

In the board of examiners, due consideration was given to students who had accepted mitigating circumstances. The process was very transparent and seemed very fair to the students.

Other comments

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

Whilst I was happy with the marks awarded in the samples I reviewed I did feel that in some cases the marks could be stretched at the top end. I saw very few marks over 75. The lack of marks at the higher end may be a contributing factor to the low number of first class degrees awarded.

Faculty of Biological Sciences
Student Education Service

Student Education Office
Irene Manton Building
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT, UK



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

8 October 2015

Dear

RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2014/15
BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – all programme variants
MBiol, BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences (Integrated Masters) – all programme variants

Thank you for attending the recent exam board and all your work reviewing our programmes and the students' work. I hope your first year as External Examiner here has gone smoothly and you have found the process interesting. In return, thank you also for your very kind comments regarding the content and management of our programmes. As you highlight, we do endeavour to ensure good depth and breadth of content as well as a very strong research focus.

The comments you make regarding the progression of assessments is not unexpected. We have been conducting an extensive review of our assessments over the last two years in terms of type, timing and progression. We had already identified the problem of 'step' changes in assessment types between levels and have been modifying assessments to ensure better preparation for the higher level-type assessments such as the extensive essay writing evident at Level 3. This has been done by modifying core tutorial modules to ensure key skills such as data analysis, full lab reports and essays are practiced at each level. This revised arrangement will continue implementation next session and will hopefully lead to a noticeable improved preparation of Level 3 students' next session. We are additionally continuing to review assessments within individual subject areas and the point you raise regarding progression in the biomechanics exams, for example, was discussed at our last Programme Group meeting. By ensuring good practice opportunities and progression of varied assessments in core modules, we hope to propagate experience and success to similar type assessments in other optional modules. We are also looking at these strands directly.

On the issue of parity between dissertations, particularly with respect to intensive lab-based studies compared with more literature/theoretical studies, we have also previously had extensive discussion and review internally. A sub-group has been established to further develop this and we are looking at additional components to add to the systematic review-type dissertations to ensure parity, as you suggest in your comments.

It is interesting to note your comment on the low number of first class degrees awarded. Partly, I believe this is a transient slight fall with this cohort, but similarly, it is something of which we are aware. We are making efforts to improve our feedback and feed-forward to students regarding assessments to ensure they can perform to the best of their ability. Equally, we are reviewing how we use marking criteria, with potentially extensive changes set to occur in the next couple of years in marking, which may encourage greater use of the full range of marking criteria. This will be an area to continually re-evaluate. It is reassuring that you comment (as did our other External Examiner) on the very high quality of some of the work submitted by our students, so there is scope to perhaps ensure we reward the best work appropriately. Again this has gone back to our Programme Group meetings for discussion and along with the development of assessment progression we will further ensure every opportunity for our exceptional students to be awarded marks commensurate with their ability.

Thank you again for your input, it is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Examinations Officer

Tel:

Email: