

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2015-2016

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 / MSci

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

No

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?

Not applicable

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

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 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 3/4 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 more than comparable with those at other institutions with which I am familiar. The FHEQ require that at least two of the five study areas set out in the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST) subject benchmarks statements are covered by the programmes aims and intended learning outcomes. The programme learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) / MSci Sport and Exercise Science and BSc Sports Science and Physiology directly map onto the following two areas specific to sport programmes;

1. The study of human responses to sport and exercise
2. The study of the performance of sport and its enhancement, monitoring and analysis.

Specifically the programme learning outcomes achieved across all levels of the programmes map onto all components within these two areas of study.

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 assessment methods adopted on the programmes are quite varied and are progressive throughout the three levels (i.e. moving from knowledge based assessments at level one to assessment of deeper learning with more emphasis on context at levels three and four). I believe there is may be room for increased variation in the modes of assessment. A comment I made last year related to feedback not always being congruent with the mark awarded (i.e. 'good' used for a piece of work which was award > 70%) and I feel this is still the case. I am very happy with the marks awarded it is simply the terminology used in the written feedback.

Specific comments;

SPSC332901 – the average marks between exam equations seems very different. Was this considered?

SPSC338901 – the assessment for the MSci students seems like a halfway house between a full project and a research proposal. Given the marks awarded I think some students may have struggled with this and team may consider looking at either the assessment or the support provided to 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 students on the programme span a large spectrum of ability however at the top end there is some really excellent students and the assessment methods adopted by the programme allow differentiation between these students and those at the lower end. This is particularly the case in the research project at level 3. 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

Not applicable

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 consistency of feedback provided to students has improved.

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 is 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. The team appear to be very proactive in updating / changing the curriculum.

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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 (and in some cases work for the whole cohort) 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 and the level of this (both in terms of quantity and quality), within and between modules, seemed to be more consistent than last year. Some of the written feedback on the front cover sheet was difficult to read and I would encourage the team to consider using electronic coversheets. 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. I am not sure whether it was just the sample I received, but it appears that the critical / systematic reviews, with which I had concerns of parity with last year, do not appear to be an option now (this is something I meant to ask).

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 very efficiently.

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. In terms of the process to make decisions on whether the mitigating circumstances were accepted, it is not possible for me to comment as we were not privy to this.

Other comments

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

The programme is of a very high quality and the support provided to students is excellent. This came across very strongly in my mid year visit when I spoke to students. The feeling was that the teaching team really care about them and can be contacted for advice / support. The team should be commended for this.

The processes in place make my job as an external examiner very easy however, it would be really useful if module statistics could be provided along with the samples in order that a clear overview of the module is possible.

Faculty of Biological Sciences
Student Education Service

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



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

7 November 2016

Dear

RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2015/16

BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – *all programme variants*

MBiol, BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences (Integrated Masters) – *all programme variants*

Thank you for all your hard work this past year reviewing our programmes and the associated assessments. We hope you have enjoyed your visits to Leeds.

It is pleasing to have the standards and achievements of the programmes recognised and of course valuable to have your input to ensure this stays the case. We have made a concerted effort in recent years to ensure progression of the assessments across the levels and their fit with learning outcomes. We have also considered the spacing of assessments and the time required for their completion. There is still some scope for perhaps reducing the assessment load, particularly at level 2, and refining our range of assessment types.

Aligning feedback and marking criteria is of course important to ensure consistency and clarity to the students with regards to the determination of marks. We will review our marking to ensure comments align more closely with the written criteria. We will also consider further increasing use of electronic feedback and ensuring that written comments are legible. We have additionally, been experimenting with the use of audio feedback as supported in Grademark, which offers another route to improve clarity and quality of feedback.

With regards to your specific concerns regarding the exam marks for SPSC3329, we did review the module marks and exam performance at our module examinations board. The exam performance was broadly in alignment with that seen previously and for each individual component question attempted a range of marks was obtained with an overall average of 61% and a standard deviation of 6%. The lowest average mark for an individual question was 51% although for this same question the maximum mark awarded was 80% with several first class marks along with some particularly low marks. As such we have no reason to suspect the assessment was influenced unduly by particular questions perhaps being trickier or easier than others.

Regarding the Masters programme which operated for the first time this year, we agree that SPSC3389 did offer a novel challenge to the students. Whilst some coped with this well overall, there is scope to offer better guidance to students and staff regarding expectations. We will refine the guidance given to students at the start of this module and review the details at our programme meetings in advance of the start of the next session to ensure we have good support in place for this module and its assessment. Further details of expectations for the assessment will be added to the information provided on the VLE as well as included in the lectures associated with this module. We will also ensure staff are proactive in thoroughly discussing the requirements with their supervised students as their projects and the research proposal develops. Thank you for your useful insight and discussion regarding our Masters programme as it develops.

We are reviewing whether to offer critical reviews as a dissertation project option. In general, most of us are happiest supervising research-focussed laboratory projects and the students themselves are unfamiliar with many of the processes required to conduct a high level systematic review. To continue to offer this option as a 40 credit project would require further training to students, and potentially also staff. The option still exists

but we have not actively promoted it and are considering how we could either support its use in a better way or perhaps simply continue the present hiatus in the use of this option.

Thank you again for your positive words regarding our programme. We will ensure you have a summary of module statistics available when you review sample work next session, as requested, and look forward to your input and seeing you again in Leeds next year.

Yours sincerely,

Examinations Officer

Tel: 0113 34

Email: