

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:	Faculty of Biological Sciences (School of Biomedical Sciences)
Subject(s):	<i>Sport and Exercise Sciences</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Sports Science and Physiology Sports Science and Physiology (Industrial) Sports Science and Physiology (International) Sports Science in Relation to Medicine Sports Science and Physiology (Integrated Masters) Sports Science and Physiology (Integrated Masters)(International)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	BSc and 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

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 – thank you

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 intended learning outcomes for the programmes and modules were appropriate, as were the structure and content of the programmes. The paperwork was very clear.
The standards were appropriate for the award and award element.
- 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 programmes I examined compare most favourably with similar programmes at other institutions where I either work or fulfil a similar examining role. Moreover, they are well-aligned with national benchmarking statements for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism and the QAA framework for HE qualifications.
- 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 varied range of appropriate assessment methods were evident across and within the levels; they were well-matched to the intended learning outcomes. All samples of work I examined was marked and moderated independently – the classifications were entirely appropriate and all border-line students were dealt with appropriately and consistently, with the students' best academic interest at the forefront of decisions.
Student performance suggests the teaching, learning and assessment methods are of a high standard – however, there is still ample room for staff to extend their marks at the top end to reward excellence. That said, it is clear the approach to learning and teaching is designed to give the students best opportunity to extend their skills, experience and application of knowledge.
Unfortunately, problems with travel arrangements meant it was not possible for me to meet the students as arranged in March 2016; hence, my comments are not based on their reflections of the programmes and /or staff.
- 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, this was evident in all the modules I examined. If anything, some of the marks for the very best students are a little depressed relative to students on programmes at other institutions of comparable reputation (see above).
The weaker students were exposed by the challenging assessments, but it is clear they were finding it difficult despite the ample support provided by dedicated staff; moreover, it is anticipated that a small number of students will find it difficult to attain the high standards expected of a well-designed and delivered programme.
- 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.

After reading <<>> report from last year, it is apparent that the high standards attained by the staff and students across the programmes have been maintained.
The students are exposed to presentation methods that are commonplace in national and international research fields; this will help those that wish to extend their education beyond the BSc and possibly pursue an academic/research career.
- 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 research excellence reported in REF2014 from this School is evident throughout the modules. The final year research projects covered a variety of highly relevant and interesting research questions expected of internationally renowned research active staff. Working at the leading edge of scientific progress and development will benefit the students enormously – it is pleasing to see this connection between research and teaching.
- 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 support provided by <<>> and <<>> was excellent – I was given samples of coursework and exam scripts, but had access to all scripts if/when required. The virtual learning environment allowed me to access materials in a timely manner and to fulfil the examining role to my complete satisfaction. If I had a preference, to match my direct expertise, it would be to concentrate on physiology/biochemistry, but I accept that it often not cost effective to appoint external examiners to cover each of the individual sub-disciplines of Sport and Exercise Science; hence, I am content to provide feedback on Motor Control modules, but hope the staff recognise my expertise in this field is not as extensive as in physiology/biochemistry.

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 – these were all either sent to me or could be accessed via the virtual learning environment. A simple list of named modules, by level (code) and semester, would make it easier to visualise the modules that I am directly responsible for; one was provided on request for semester two.

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?**

Yes – following some very minor adjustments, they were all at the appropriate level and the nature of them was well matched to the intended learning outcomes. Now that I have spent a considerable amount of time examining the multiple choice and short answer questions – it should only be necessary for me to view new questions in these categories over the coming years.

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?**

Yes, I am content that the samples were an accurate representation of the modules and students' performance; thus, I have complete confidence in my evaluation of the standard of student work. All sampled work was moderated in a fair and consistent manner by the staff.

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

Yes, it was excellent – I also examined the MSci projects, which were also appropriate. The MSci project module may take some time to settle, but this is always expected of a new module – this was discussed extensively and I would not recommend any changes after only a single run of the module with five students. The method and standard of assessment was entirely appropriate and demonstrated that some of the research the students are conducting very close to a publishable standard.

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?**

<<>> and <<>> were excellent – the conduct of the Board was very fair and consistent; I am satisfied that all decisions were made with the students' interests at heart. All recommendations were appropriate and I was in complete agreement with them – it was pleasing to see so many academic staff in attendance; a clear sign that they support the students throughout the academic process.

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

Yes, this was clearly evident and very fair.

Other comments

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

I extend sincere thanks to the kind hospitality of all the staff who supported my visit for the Board meeting – particularly to <<>>, <<>> and <<>>. The programmes are led, managed, taught and administered to a high standard, which is becoming of an excellent University and teaching Centre.

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 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

Thank you for your hard work and time reviewing our programmes with all the associated assessments. It is a shame you were not able to meet with the students earlier in the year but hopefully you have managed to gain a good feel for the contents of our programme, the range of material and associated assessments the students encounter. We appreciate your input to all areas of our programmes even when it strays slightly out of your core expertise as is the case for some parts of the motor control modules. By having two External Examiners with complimentary expertise, we can ensure a good range of appropriate feedback across the disciplines.

Firstly, thank you for your positive comments with respect to the experience we offer our students. As you recognise, we are research-focussed in our approach and this does translate to the experience offered to our students. In relation to your comment about being a little less conservative with our marks at the top end, there have been recent changes to our marking criteria at levels 1 and 2 to encourage fuller use of the range of marks available. A University-wide review of marking criteria is ongoing related to the anticipated move to returning grade point averages for students. Locally we will be revisiting and reviewing our own use of marking criteria to ensure we always align our comments with the criteria appropriately and make full use of the range of marks available.

The MSci programme is very much in its infancy and we will endeavour to prepare students for the associated assessments and module content as best as possible. As a response to this year's experiences we will be increasing the guidance offered to students undertaking the writing of the research proposal (SPSC3389) since this is a novel undertaking for these students. Hopefully this will be sufficient at this stage to improve performance in this element and reduce any confusion regarding expectations.

Once again thank you for your valued input and we look forward to working with you again over the next academic session.

Best wishes,

Examinations Officer

Tel: 0113 34
Email: