

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	School of Biomedical Sciences
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>LEED Modules</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	LEED1030 Outdoor Adventure – History & Development LEED1031 Leadership and Teams LEED1300 Skills in Sports and Outdoor Activities LEED2004 The LEEDS Award LEED2009 Teaching and Coaching your People LEED2012 The Olympic Games – Sport, Education, Business and Culture LEED2030 Outdoor Adventure – Mapping and Navigation LEED2031 Outdoor Adventure and Team Building LEED2042 A Career in PE Teaching LEED2050 Event Management LEED2060 Sport Development & Management LEED2070 Introduction to Strength and Conditioning LEED3001 Research Development Project LEED3002 Outdoor Adventure – Land, Water & Air Based Outdoor Activities
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	Discovery Modules

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.

The are many areas of innovative practice within the LEED modules with one of the greatest strengths being the strong applied focus and alignment to help enhance student graduate attributes, personal skills and competencies. The strong applied focus is not only within the nature of the delivery but also followed through in interesting and more innovative and creative assessment tasks such as within the many reflective writing tasks linked to practical activities across most of the modules. Getting students to critically reflect on their participation and learning will get students to think in a way that perhaps they have not had to do before, particularly on more pure science based subjects.

One point of good practice is the availability of the LEED modules to deliver the lectures via podcast to help cater for different learning styles, disabilities or for other student needs such as dual career athletes who maybe away on competition and need to be able to keep in touch via online resources.

I think the number and type of LEED modules is a strength in itself and an excellence addition for any student to take, and particularly for those studying in the area of sport and exercise science. It would be good practice for other Sport Science Departments in the country to offer such a range to enable this breadth and application of the subject of sport.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

The previous external examiner's (EE) comments discussed the outcomes from meeting a group of students with some issues around being unclear about assessment types and word count of assessments with

students' feedback about the amount of words for the reflective log that, from what I could see, has been reduced from 3000 to 2000 illustrating a clear area of action from student feedback.

The previous EE also noted the difficulty of moderating without the provision of criteria which, whilst many modules had marking criteria for me to view, this was not the case for all modules. In addition, previous EE comments mentioned the lack of comments on feedback sheets, this again showed mixed practice of some markers providing sufficient and comprehensive feedback with others adding little.

I would agree also with the previous EE, to continue to find ways to ensure that the standard of English language is improved in both grammar and general errors within student work. As a minimum, this should include ensuring errors are picked up within the marking process, and commenting within the overall summary sheet that was not always the case here.

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

N/A

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	N/A
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	N/A
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	N/A
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	N/A

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

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	N/A
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	N/A
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	N/A
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	N/A
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	N/A

Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.

The above is not applicable for the LEED Modules

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	N
<p><i>Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)</i></p> <p>The LEED modules have a more obvious focus on helping to enhance students' graduate employability through development of self-reflection in particular. Whilst students are evidencing their work to varying degrees, with theory and supporting references, the extent of this could be developed.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N/A
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N/A
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i></p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y for module design
<p><i>Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: 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></p> <p>On the whole, the assignment titles were well thought through, provided sufficient range within the module and enabled the learning outcomes to be met. In some cases, I question the need for the particular assessment type and learning outcome e.g. LEED 1031 Learning Outcome: Structure and Organisation of Sport and Assessment: knowledge of one governing body, whether this would sit more naturally in LEED 1030. This would then allow the assessment of the other key areas of LEED 1031 to be made more obviously. Another was for 1030 where it was not clear by the assessments how all learning outcomes were assessed.</p> <p>Where the assessment tasks or Module Handbooks were not provided it was difficult for me to know if all the learning outcomes had been assessed but in the majority of cases this was clear.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	N/A
<p><i>Please comment on 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:</i></p> <p>The overall standard of students' work was comparable with other institutions that I have been external examiner at with similar applied modules. There were times where the marks seemed more generous to that I would have awarded, as also noted by the previous external examiner, that is worth reflecting on and considering in light of work around assessing the appropriateness of marking schemes as detailed later, which may help this area.</p>		

Areas for improvement of students' work would be for students to better evidence their work and show clearer links to theory and evidence to support their assessments, even where it involves a reflective piece of work, this can still be done and adds a further depth of critical thinking to their work. This was particularly evident in the more practical pieces of work where students reverted into a more conversational account for example about bungee jumping, on such occasions marks seemed a little high. For some modules, a review of the amount of theoretical content covered may help this as well as potentially helping increase the range and standard deviation of overall students' marks, where for e.g. in LEED 1300 it looked like only 4 subject theory sessions were covered out of 7 with the other sessions around introduction, planning and assessment. In addition to this, the structure of student essays could be improved where for some they were not written as essays in typical style.

The marks for LEED 2070 were notably lower than other modules, although this may be due to the module being new and would be reflected and acted upon for future delivery.

I have said N/A to 19 thinking for the majority of programmes the LEED modules are not written into the Programme aims and intended learning outcomes, although given the Sport and Exercise degrees have the LEED Modules as an option, this may well be the case that I am unaware of.

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

Some markers provided very comprehensive and relevant feedback providing tailored points for improvement and I was impressed in one case where the mark was 80 (LEED 2050) and there was still a whole list of bullet points on how to further improve which I think is a model of good practice as too often markers stop at about 75 and do not provide feedback to the student about how they could have improved further, as was seen in some cases here. One of the oral presentations had general feedback to all which I thought was a good addition (LEED 1031). I would also agree with the previous external examiner comments that some of the feedback on the overall feedback sheet added little for the students to gain from, this is in relation to both amount and nature of feedback at times where if providing a comment of 'good' or 'very good' it is not helping to inform the student of how or why, for example. I would recommend a minimum standard of feedback for all markers to follow as a guide in relation to, for example, ensuring summary comments are provided to all students including key points for improvement in addition to comments on the script. This may be helped by increasing the size of the comments box to allow for this. There were however, lots of good examples of marked work where markers had clearly spent a lot of time providing good feedback both on the script and on the feedback sheet. I would also recommend where possible that the feedback is typed, to overcome any issues with handwriting. Use of online marking and feedback with the addition of being able to provide oral feedback through podcasts could also enhance the provision of feedback.

Some of the feedback did not relate to typical degree classification terminology and mark schemes and if I read the comments I could often not guess what the mark would be, as the relationship between comments and level descriptors could be better matched. I have not seen the University marking matrix but I think a lot of the marking criteria/assessment matrices could be more clearly aligned to Level standards of the university marking matrix, for e.g. some of the reflective marking schemes used in a number of modules used terminology that I have not seen elsewhere such as the 80-100 category has 'beautifully written log' and 'well written log' at 70-80' – which is not conventional to university marking criteria that relates to usual taxonomies for university assessment rubrics. I recommend all the marking criteria conform to university standards so it is easier to see how marks are awarded through clearer labels. This not only assists the marker to make consistent and reliable judgments about the quality of student work, but also so it can be used more easily to provide feedback to students about the quality of their work and how they might improve.

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	N/A
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	In many cases
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	N/A
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	N/A
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	N/A
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y via skype
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p>		

Other comments

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

Overall, the LEED modules are an excellent strength for the University of Leeds and students who study these modules. The module leaders clearly provide an interesting set of modules with much thought around assessment types and modes of delivery which is to be commended. Key areas for improvement would be: to ensure all assessments address learning outcome; to reflect on amount of theory provided within modules to support students use of theory in assignments; improving students' English language and essay writing; and around ensuring the consistency across all modules within the marking process and provision of information to the EE. Such areas of consistency include: nature and extent of feedback; alignment of comments to appropriate level descriptors; alignment of module specific marking criteria to university marking criteria; work available to the external examiner to ensure all relevant work is uploaded for each module (e.g. all assessments, to include power point slides for oral presentations where available; module handbooks; and marking criteria) and to include all module handbooks with recommended detail within it as below.

Module Handbooks

I would recommend all module handbooks to include assignment title, assessment briefs, assessment deadline and module marking schemes to make it easier for both students and external examiner to understand the assessment and marking processes. The number of learning hours and contact hours would also be helpful e.g. hours spent in practical versus theory or guided independent study.

EE access to work

It would be helpful if a link to Moodle could be provided with the marks or to the EE separately so that I could see how Moodle supports learning.

Points for consideration at University level

With regard to word length or equivalent, depending on forms of assessment, many universities have 2000 words for 10 credits as the guide where here students are doing 4000 words for 10 credits that I would recommend for university review of assessment weightings.

I was also surprised to hear that Level 6 students could take level 4 modules where it contributed to the final degree classification and wondered if this provided an unfair advantage in their final mark to those students who select Discovery modules as opposed to those who do not.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Assessment Lead, Sport and Exercise Sciences Programmes
Faculty / School of:	Faculty of Biological Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences
Address for communication:	School of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

*If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.

Completing the School response

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at qat@leeds.ac.uk. External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

It is very nice to have the innovative series of modules we offer recognised as such a great exemplar even potentially to other institutions. Thank you for your kind words and recognition of the achievements of our staff as well as the key role these modules play in broadening and strengthening the skills of our students. We have endeavoured to align assessment tasks to learning outcomes whilst also promoting the development of a good range of skills. The recognised innovative assessment methods are a key part of developing and enhancing these skills. We are increasing our use of electronic resources and making many teaching materials and sessions available online – particularly valuable for ensuring accessibility to those with disabilities, international students and others such as athletes with competitive commitments and so can use this to stay engaged with the courses. Thank you again for your kind comments on the range of modules and key skills we develop with the modules.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We have worked to ensure better consistency in terms of assessment and feedback across the modules this year. Marking criteria are being further refined along with feedback proformas to help ensure clear, good quality feedback is returned to the students. This appears to have improved overall feedback from the cohort this year but we agree there is still some room for improvement and this will be a focus again this coming session. With the high number of international students enrolled on these modules standards of English can be slightly variable and we shall ensure we make better use of available support from services such as the library and international support office to support students as appropriate.

Response to Matters for Urgent Attention

If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:

No matters requiring urgent attention were identified.

Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

No specific points are raised however we will ensure all marking criteria are available and clearly associated with the appropriate items when work is reviewed for the next session, as briefly referred to in the first section.

Standards

Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

Employability is a key focus and the reflective skills and practices developed in several of the modules are often infrequently encountered elsewhere in the student's taught programmes. There is scope to encourage students to engage with theory of practice and demonstrate this to a greater extent and we will be developing our assessments and given expectations of the students to reflect this.

Assessment and Feedback

Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We have noted the comments on marks awarded appearing, in a few instances, to be more generous than with other institutions with comparable applied modules, whilst also noting the lower marks in one module. We also acknowledge that some of the feedback given to our students did not always relate to the typical terminology used within the marking schemes, which can lead to confusion regarding relating feedback to the final mark. We will be revisiting our marking criteria and feedback forms to ensure they align appropriately with the assignments in all cases and that when marking we ensure we clearly relate comments and given marks to the published criteria. Additional expanded feedback boxes will be added to forms to encourage fuller feedback is given and all criteria will be made readily available from the outset to students.

We shall reflect on the amount of theory provided within modules to support students' use of theory in assignments. Clearer guidance and expectation will be given on the use of supporting sources and theory to underpin assignments.

Whilst we did make all module handbooks and the appropriate samples of all assessment tasks available to the external examiner, we acknowledge that some of the assessment tasks were made available only just prior to the Assessment Board Meeting. We shall ensure that all material for the external examiner is available as early as possible next year.

The Progression and Awards Process

Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

All seemed ok but we will of course ensure all marking criteria are available and clearly associated with sample work next session.

Other comments

Response to items included in the 'Other Comments' section of the report

The recommendations on module handbooks shall now be adopted, in particular to ensure that assessment titles, briefs, deadlines are all clearly stated. We would agree that, in so doing, "it would make it easier for both students and the external examiner to understand the assessment and marking processes". We would like to note that LEED module handbooks (in line with all others in the Faculty of Biological Sciences) currently already include a section on assessment, which directs students to the Code of Practice on Assessment (COPA) accessible on the VLE, which provides generic marking criteria, procedures and regulations for assessment. Where marking criteria differs from the templates given in the COPA these will be made available to the students either as part of the module handbook and/or online via the VLE.

In light of the comments made on the length of assessments in relation to module credits, we shall consider whether we need either to reduce word counts or provide greater weighting for larger pieces of work.

We will improve the breadth of material currently made available to the external examiner, eg power point slides or recordings for oral presentations as available to allow better review of these elements.



24 July 2017

Dear

I am responding on behalf of the University of Leeds to issues you raised in your external examiner's report for LEED Modules, in the Faculty of Biological Sciences, received on 13 July 2017.

I note that in your recent report you highlighted assessment weightings and the ability of Level 6 students to take Level 4 modules that contribute to the degree classification.

Assessment weightings

The University does not prescribe word counts per credit due to the diverse portfolio and the variation of assessment methods dependent upon subject discipline. However, the appropriateness of assessment methodologies are reviewed as part of our approval and review processes.

Undertaking level 4 modules at Level 6

A maximum of 20 credits of FHEQ Level 4 skills Discovery modules, subject to the provision of the programme of study concerned, may be taken at FHEQ Level 6. However, skills Discovery modules are single-weighted in the classification algorithm (Rules for Award, section 10.4, External Examiners Handbook page 34), ensuring that Level 6 students taking Level 4 modules are not at an unfair advantage over their peers who are unable, or choose not, to select Discovery modules.

I would like to take the opportunity to reassure you that the University takes very seriously the views of our external examiners and consider them thoroughly as part of our reflection on the standards of our awards and the quality of our students' experiences.

I hope that this response goes some way to reassuring you that the University values greatly the time, effort and experience contributed by its External Examiners to the assurance of the standards and quality of its taught programme provision. May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your support as an external examiner.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Quality Assurance