

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of: Faculty of Biological Sciences (School of Biomedical Sciences)

Subject(s): *Sport and Exercise Sciences*

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

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 quality of feedback is consistently very good across modules and levels; all of the work I examined had been moderated. The standardised feedback proformas for the modules are very good – particularly the viva for SPSC5382M with its graduated mark scale. The variety and balance of assessment across the programmes are excellent. The administration by _____ and the team, and the support provided by _____ is excellent.

Enhancements made from the previous year

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

There appears to have been an increase in the number of staff using Grademark and a reduction in illegible, handwritten feedback (though there are still examples of this). The quality of provisional was excellent last year; hence, the team are aiming for marginal gains to coin a phrase.

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

The team are aware of the issue raised by the students about one of the assessments in SPSC3301 and this is being adjusted for 2017-18. The team could look to provide more generous marks at the top end for excellent work.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

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

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

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

The standard of provision is excellent; hence, I have only witnessed marginal, yet important levels of progression since last year. There is only scope for small gains when the baseline is so good.

Standards

| | | |
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| 8. | Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study? | Y |
| 9. | Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met? | Y |
| 10. | Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award? | Y |
| 11. | Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)? | Y |
| 12. | Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions? | Y |
| <p>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes. This has not changed from last year: 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. 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. The University's Gold award in the recent TEF is reflected in the learning and teaching in this subject.</p> | | |
| 13. | Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear? | Y |
| <p>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)</p> <p>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.</p> | | |
| 14. | Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD? | N |
| <p>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</p> | | |
| 15. | Does the programme include clinical practice components? | N |
| <p>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</p> | | |
| 16. | Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)? | N |
| <p>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</p> | | |

Assessment and Feedback

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 17. | Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment? | Y |
| <p>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.</p> <p>The range, level and standard of assessments are excellent and well aligned with the ILOs. The classification of awards is fair, transparent and applied consistently across all students. The number of first class honours awards is probably a little lower than other comparable institutions I am aware of – perhaps the staff could use the upper range of marks a little more.</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? | Y |
| <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> Yes, this was evident in all the modules I examined. As with last year, some of the marks for the very best students could be elevated relative to students on programmes at other institutions of comparable reputation.</p> | | |
| <p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i> Wherever possible, I would encourage staff to type their feedback as some of the hand-written comments are illegible.</p> | | |

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? | Y |
| 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? | Y |
| 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? | Y |
| 30. | Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate? | Y |
| 31. | Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations? | Y |
| 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 |
| 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> The conduct of the awards board meeting was exemplary.</p> | | |

Other comments

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

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Faculty / School of:

Address for communication:

Email:

Telephone:

Assessment Lead - Sport and Exercise Sciences

Faculty of Biological Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences

School of Biomedical Sciences,
Faculty of Biological Sciences
University of Leeds, Leeds. LS2 9JT

*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

We would like to thank you for your very positive and supportive comments regarding our programmes. We would like to thank you for recognising our good practise with respect to feedback and the use of standardised feedback proformas to improve clarity and consistency. There has been considerable effort over the last year to improve consistency in our marking criteria, (particularly), in conjunction with our students, as well as highlighting the criteria and feedback forms to the students. This appears to have increased student satisfaction with the assessment process and perceived transparency.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We appreciate the feedback that our provision is excellent, and as such we are looking for 'marginal gains'. There has been a slight increase in the use of electronic means of feedback, although the majority is still in handwritten form. We acknowledge that we can still increase our use of facilities such as Grademark, and provide typed feedback to minimise/ eliminate illegible feedback being returned to the students, and as a teaching team we will take this feedback on board. The redesigned feedback proformas do however also help clarify feedback to the students.

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:

As a teaching team we are aware of some student concerns regarding one of the assessments in SPSC3301 (although it was very much a minority who felt dissatisfied with the assessment format and balance), and we have already revised the assessment for this module for the 2017/2018 session to increase opportunity for student to demonstrate ability.

As you noted, we do perhaps award fewer first class degrees than programmes elsewhere, particularly in recent years. Within the sector there has been an increase in first-class degrees and we have perhaps stayed a lot more consistent over the years. As you also noted however, we do have students produce truly excellent work and perhaps we need to consider we are giving them the full recognition deserved, as related to our own internal standards and externally. We will be considering this as we revisit our marking criteria and ensure we are suitably acknowledging and rewarding the excellent work of our students.

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:

Thank you for your positive feedback regarding our excellent provision. We continually strive to improve our programme and student experience and it is encouraging to know we are achieving this.

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:

Thank you for your encouraging and supportive comments regarding our standards. We have worked hard to include a varied range of assessment methods in our programme, and it remains encouraging that we are meeting the expectations of the national subject benchmark, at the appropriate level. Similarly, we appreciate the comment that the best academic interest of our students were at the forefront of the decisions we make as a programme team.

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 appreciate that there is scope to acknowledge excellent student performance by using the top end of the marking range, and we will look at this from a programme perspective, and when reviews of our marking criteria take place. Similarly, we will endeavour to resolve issues of ineligible feedback being returned to students, with providing typed feedback for all assessments the ultimate goal.

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:

We very much appreciate the comment that the conduct of our awards board meeting was exemplary, and will strive to maintain these high standards. We agree this is very much facilitated by the excellent administration support provided by _____, and the hard work of all those involved in the programme.

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

N/A