

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-18

QAT Received 25/06/2018

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Biological Sciences
<i>Subject(s):</i>	<i>Sport and Exercise Sciences</i>
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	Biomechanics and Psychology Modules across; Sport and Exercise Sciences Sports Science and Physiology Sports Science in Relation to Medicine
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	BSc / 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 programme team are clearly delivering very high quality programmes. The programmes have a wide range of assessments for the students, some of which are both innovative and have real-world applications. The processes and procedures adopted across the programmes are rigorous and transparent and the teaching team clearly provide a high level of support to the students.

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 consistency of use of feedback proformas and the feedback (including annotations) itself has improved over the past year. In previous years I commented that it would be really useful if module statistics could be provided along with the samples in order that a clear overview of the module was possible. These were made available this year and proved to be very useful.

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 Examiner Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	Y / N
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

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

Over the past four years, the programme team have made many changes to the programmes. These have been partly in response to comments from the external examiners but primarily due to continuous evaluation of the programmes and student feedback. The programme team should be commended for continually looking to enhance the student experience and not simply relying on the fact that the programmes are strong and compares very favourably with similar programmes in the sector.

Standards

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

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

The ILOs for the programmes and modules are commensurate with the level of award. The quality of the programmes is very good. The structure and content provides appropriate depth and breadth and there is very good progression throughout the 3/4 years. The standards and achievements of students across all years of the programmes 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 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.

13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y / N
-----	---	-------

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)

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 or systematic reviews. The team appear to be very proactive in updating / changing the curriculum.

14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:

N/A

15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:

N/A

16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
-----	--	-------

Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:

N/A

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y / N
<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>The programme team are clearly delivering a very high quality programmes and this is recognised by the students. The assessment methods adopted on the programmes are really 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). The assessments have been well designed to assess the ILOs of the module and these appear to be reviewed regularly. I view recent changes to assessments on the interdisciplinary module as very positive as they expose students to real world scenarios. Whilst some concerns have been raised by students about the new assessment, I think that these were responded to very well and are simply as a result of the change.</p>		
18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y / N
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y / N
<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 students on the programmes span a large spectrum of ability however at the top end there is some really excellent students and the assessment methods adopted by the programmes 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. Whilst a good range of marks have been used very well on some modules, the top end marks for the dissertation are clustered around 71/72%. This may be appropriate, however, given the strength of the students that the programmes attract, I would like to see these marks stretched.</p> <p>The number of first class degrees awarded on the programmes seems higher than previous years which is good, although it would be good to see more.</p>		
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:</i></p>		

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiner's role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y / N
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y / N
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y / N
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	Y / N
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y / N
27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y / N
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y / N
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	Y / N
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y / N
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y / N

32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y / N
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y / N

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:

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. I have commented for the past couple of years, and would reiterate again now, that I strongly recommend the team consider using electronic coversheets (as oppose to hand written comments) to ensure a high quality student learning experience. Clear evidence of second marking / moderating demonstrated a transparent and rigorous process. Questions I had relating to the agreement of marks for the dissertation have been satisfactorily addressed.

The choice of subjects for dissertations was very appropriate. The method and standard of assessment was also appropriate. There was some discussion around systematic reviews vs traditional lab based dissertations and I am very happy that students are given the choice, and I am confident that the appropriate level of support is given for both.

I am unable to answer question 27 as the arrangements to consider my comments were not discussed with me. I believe however, that my comments have been considered and (where appropriate) acted upon.

Other comments

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

The programmes are of a very high quality and the support provided to students is excellent. The teaching team are committed to improving the programmes / student experience. It has been a pleasure to be an external examiner for these programmes.

Part C: School Response to External Examiner Report

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Examiner:

Subject(s):

Sport and Exercise Sciences

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

Title and Name of Responder:

Position:*

Programme Leader (Sport and Exercise Sciences)

Faculty / School of:

Biological Sciences/Biomedical Sciences

Address for communication:

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 gat@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

In line with University strategy we have been reviewing our type, and number of assessments across our academic programme. This year we have 3 new, notable assessments in SPSC 3125, 2131/2309 and 3301. All these assessments involve the real world application of science, mirroring possible scenarios found in the workplace for sport and exercise science students. Through the next 2-3 academic years as we review, revise and enhance our programmes we hope to move away from traditional formats of assessment e.g. essays, long answer question to provide a broader range of assessments, and where possible to include a choice of assessments, such that the learning outcomes can be met in a number of ways.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

We are pleased that the additional statistics have provided further information about performance across our cohort; this is something we will continue to provide. We have worked hard on the feedback proformas, and importantly they have been designed in conjunction with our student body. We are now, moving forward, discussing the use of e-marking where possible, or as a minimum providing word processed summary feedback and feedforward to improve legibility.

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:

N/A

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:

We thank you for the positive comments related to our programme. The continual evaluation of the programme is important to us, and we strive to involve students when important changes are to be made. For next academic year

we have already developed 2 new modules in collaboration with our students, and hope these are more tailored to the students we attract and again, provide more lab time to develop technical skills required in the workplace.

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:

Once again we are pleased we meet the ILO's for a Sport and Exercise Sciences programme. Providing a rich research focused environment for study for our students is very important and it is pleasing to hear this is being recognised. We strive to provide level 3/5 projects aligned to our research despite limited lab space, and at times a high student: staff ratio. As our staff number grow we hope to provide a greater breadth of projects, and will update our 'skills' modules at level 1 and 2 to ensure our students are equipped for these type of projects. In addition, as we work more closely with the Faculty of Medicine and Health, colleagues in the School of Psychology now offer projects to our students to complete, with a focus of health, obesity and exercise in particular. We will review this at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. We are also reviewing the type of projects we offer, and seek to obtain advice from across our school/faculty to offer a broader learning experience.

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 worked hard over the past few years to enhance our assessment and feedback procedures. The assessment in SPSC 3301 was introduced after feedback from previous cohorts, and as part of a natural review process for assessments that had been in place for some time. We have amended the 'tender' assessment to a 'grant presentation' to enhance a specific sport. While elements are unfamiliar to students, we believe that given this assessment reflects the workplace it adds value to our assessment portfolio, and will review it again after this the 2018-2019 academic year. We agree that there is a clustering of marks around the low 70's in our dissertations. Given this, we will provide guidance to staff on how to use criteria, looking at exemplars via our programme meeting.

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 agree we should now look at providing word processed summary feedback to enhance the feedback/feedforward process, and/or where possible make use of e-marking. This will also enhance the transparency of the check marking process. As we move to offering a greater variety of projects in addition to those offered we will draw on the experience of our colleagues to ensure all projects are equal in terms of level of support. I can confirm we have/will act upon all feedback/comment provided by our external examiners. Moving forwards I will work with the assessment lead to ensure where and how this has been done is more transparent.

Other comments

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

We are very proud of programmes and strive to enhance the learning experience every year- it is good to hear our efforts are recognised from a respected member of staff at a comparable institution. Our programmes benefit greatly from our external examiners comments, providing an objective view of our delivery, assessment, content of the programme and the procedures we follow. We would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to _____ for support over the past 4 years.