

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 23/06/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Biological Sciences

Subject(s):

LEED Sport

Programme(s) / Module(s):

LEED1031 – Leadership and Teams
LEED1201 – Supporting the Injured Athlete
LEED1300 – Skills in Sports and Outdoor Activities
LEED2009 – Teaching and coaching your people
LEED2031 – Outdoor Adventure and Team Building
LEED2050 – Event Management
LEED2060 – Sport Development & Management
LEED2070 – Introduction to Strength and Conditioning
LEED2131 – Emerging Leaders
LEED3002 – Outdoor Adventure

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

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.

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 applied module-specific detail provided within each Grade Descriptor, as a marking guide, is in itself an example of both enhancement and good practice, notwithstanding the comments that are made at other times within this report around levelness and appropriateness of terminology in descriptors. The quality of marking criteria/grade descriptors have also noticeably improved over the 3 years that I have been examining in response to External Examiner comments and the teams' on-going personal reflection of performance that is evidence, contributing to the enhancement of marking consistency of standards.

The introduction of a new module this academic year and doubling of student numbers on both LEED1201 and LEED2070 reflect also 2 years of student comments that I have heard about the support for these modules. In talking to a selection of students across a range of LEED Modules over the last 2 years I have heard only positive comments about the nature and effect of these modules, aside any minor comments. This student satisfaction, enjoyment and support for these modules in providing students with alternative pedagogical styles and learning to support their future graduate employment helping to enhance a wider range of skills, competencies and personal qualities to support or add to that in their core curriculum was voiced unanimously from students from a range of disciplines.

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

I recommend that Leeds University carry out a review of Grade Descriptors used across the sector to consider the appropriateness of levelness and descriptors used by the University and to ensure generic marking criteria align within faculties. This is something that I have noticed and commented on in the 3 years of examining. The Faculty of Biological Sciences Grade Descriptor uses terminology at the first class level 70-79 that is more commonly seen at the 2i at other universities I have both worked within and examined at, in addition, to other universities where I have been part of a review and launch of a university wide Grade Descriptor this Academic Year. This is key to ensure that staff are marking consistently to the same level and to levels consistent with standards set at other universities. Whilst there has been an excellent effort and detailed information gone into the marking grids, the wording does not always show evidence of how a marker could consistently mark the work. For the reflective marking criteria for example the 80-100 and 70-80 are the same words for Personal Planning. There is not a consistent shift from one classification band to another and this should be the same for all modules.

A second area of review is for the Course Team to review their assessment weighting in line with Leeds University assessment tariff as for 10 credit modules all assessments are equivalent to 4000 words that meets the University 20 credit module weighting. Students could be concerned with being over assessed as well as it putting unnecessary burden on students who elect these modules.

For Examiners in the first year of appointment only

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 only

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?	Y
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

Progressive development and enhancements on learning, teaching, standards, marking and assessment:

The course team should be commended for their self-reflection and commitment for continual improvement in addition, to providing an excellent range of modules that are current and relevant to the student experience. Their enhancement to the student experience is seen in particular around the work the modules and staff do in helping to enhance students' graduate attributes, such as confidence, resilience, problem solving, communication, self-reflection and many other attributes and behavioural competences perhaps not developed sufficiently in their core curriculum.

Changes year on year have been seen in the improvements to marking and feedback through enhanced marking templates and alignment to the Faculty of Biological Sciences Grade Descriptor, quality of marking with a focus on ensuring there are some points for improvement, although this is an area that could be improved further to achieve consistent measures. The consistency of information in Module Handbooks has improved as well as ensuring all the assessment details and schemes of work is clear in all Handbooks.

There has been a clear improvement in the information to help student's better structure their answer and to provide a more in depth answer for self-reflection where left without this detailed guidance, students would find difficult. The Module Leader has clearly applied a theoretical framework to help with this that was not seen in the first year. In addition, the team of run self-reflection classes as an additional offer to support students this academic year – this is an excellent addition and illustrates the commitment of the team to provide this extra support.

Procedures:

The new online TED (Taught Education Database) will be an improvement once established but a needed function will also be a view that shows all the individual student module marks so the marks profile per student is visible as well as at module level. This will allow the LEED Module Leaders and Course Lead for LEED, to be aware of how students do on their course compared to the rest of their provision and consider this year on year to look at any trends.

Standards

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?	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?	Y
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>Given the LEED modules do not make up an entire programme and this external examining is at module level, I have only been able to answer this to a certain degree.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<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>Students are encouraged to apply theory to practice. This is seen where theoretical models have been used such as leadership models or psychological theory or learning processes applied. In addition there is a Level 3 Research Project module that allows this but did not run this academic year given low numbers.</p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<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
<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 / 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>		

At a module level, the Learning Outcomes (LOs) are clearly assessed. The assessments are varied and interesting that have been well thought through to match the LOs whilst also providing students with interesting, applied and relevant assessments to help enhance their employability. There are a wide range of assessments including oral presentations, essay, reflective tasks, concise writing, lesson planning and reports. Student feedback has been very positive about the modules where students have enjoyed the applied nature of teaching, embedding teaching and learning in practice and practical environments- this is a key strength of the Sport LEED modules.

Three areas for improvement in assessment and feedback are:

The two aspects highlighted for immediate attention earlier in this report around 1) the levelness and appropriateness of terminology and 2) the need to review the assessment weightings of the 10 credit modules that are currently over assessing students in terms of word count. Here I would be cautious about reducing the number of assessments so the team do not lose the core benefits from these applied modules, but perhaps the nature of some assessments and word count might do this best.

The third area for improvement is in the quantity of feedback provided for students on how to improve their work that was particularly noted for example where a Mark of 67 was given and only 3 points in feedback, with only 2 points for improvements that were not sizeable tasks. In this example, if they are going to add another 33 marks they will need more points than 'to look at Harvard referencing style' and 'add a short introduction to the theory'. Some of the templates looked to limit comments where the space was only possible for a sentence, I think half a page would be better. Module 1300 had a wider section for comments that I'd recommend for all mark sheets to allow a greater number and depth of feedback to guide the students on how to make substantial improvements to their marks.

Similarly with the oral presentation feedback - more depth of feedback could be given aside comments on 'avoid reading from notes and make better eye contact'. It maybe that training for staff on how to improve feedback for oral presentations may be needed if it is covering areas outside of subject content to enable the depth of feedback to be given when not about subject content that they may be more familiar with in feedback.

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

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:

The academic standards are satisfactory for comparable modules. The standard of writing has improved since the first year although that cohort had a number of international students.

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

There are a lot of modules that focus on reflective assessment which is excellent and particularly in today's environment with today's focus on graduate employability as a key part of why people go to university. I think the LEED modules could capitalise on this for 1) promoting the modules, but perhaps more importantly to 2) demonstrate these modules as a way of specifically enabling students to develop their graduate attributes, skills and personal behaviours. I would recommend that the modules add in theoretical content about employability for students to be able to draw on.

The team have however, introduced reflective learning classes for students this academic year as referred to above again showing reflection on their own teaching practice and improvements based on student need.

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
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

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

Access to the Shared Drive where the external examiner work is kept was very difficult to access remotely via surface pro to the extent that I spent an hour on the phone to the IT help desk who were extremely helpful but the time taken was prohibitive. To overcome this I asked the Student Education Service Officer (LEED Modules) supporting the LEED Modules for the Sport area to send me all work via attachment that was done immediately and made the task of an external examiner 100% easier. Thanks to [redacted] for taking the time to do this. In addition, my IT account had been disabled so had to overcome this at the start of the process as well take the annual online cyber security module, all of which added unwanted time. I clearly understand the importance of such security modules but if already working at a university and have completed similar modules perhaps this could exempt externals from doing this module.

Other comments

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

With a change of teaching staff this academic year, there are now no female staff lecturing or leading the Sport LEED Modules, whilst this is not necessarily an issue given these are one part of their degree rather than the whole, it might be that some students would like to discuss the Sport LEED modules with a female member of staff. The diversity of staff generally is something the team could consider going forward.

The Sport LEED modules are definitely an asset to students studying at Leeds University and carried out by a very dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff doing a great job. I commend them for their work and enthusiasm for providing an excellent student experience as illustrated in some student quotes below:

“Definitely all the transferable skills that you can take with you into work”

“Really prepared me for being a teacher that I want to do as doing the course alone this doesn't do this. Having had practice interviews it helps as on my course I wouldn't have had this.”

“The environment, you get more involved as they apply it well to the real world”

“ It opens yourself up to new modules and experiences”

“Learn about yourself, a lot more than you would without doing these modules”

“Learn how to be more confident in uncomfortable situations”

“The residential has been great fun to get to know people”

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)*Title and Name of Examiner:**Subject(s):**Programme(s) / Module(s):*

LEED Module Programme (Discovery Modules)

Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):

N/A

*Title and Name of Responder:**Position*:*

Professional Development Manager

Faculty / School of:

Sport and Physical Activity

*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) must be sent 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

N/A

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

Over the last twelve months, the LEED team have worked hard to progress and develop our policies and practices. It is pleasing to hear that the full review of our module learning outcomes and assessment documentation has been recognised, and in turn, has led to an improvement in student education.

As a team, we are committed to providing access to our modules to as many students as possible. The doubling in student numbers in certain modules, along with the increase in overall numbers studying with us, only goes to demonstrate the progress that has been highlighted in this report.

We continue to develop the quality and quantity of our offer and we are now in the process of a module review that will take in the period up to and including 2021-22.

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:

We note the External Examiner's comments on grade descriptors and the need for generic marking criteria, which align within and across all university faculties. The LEED team regularly review the assessment criteria that we develop in order to identify areas in which we can strengthen and improve consistency of approach to assessment across our modules. We are also aligned to the wider faculty and their approach to such matters. As an institution, the University of Leeds is committed to the LEEDS Expectations for Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) which aims to create a holistic and complete approach to assessment and feedback at Leeds. The LEED modules has been participating in this exercise and welcomes the opportunity to ensure of approach, especially when pursuing opportunities to develop modules with faculties other than FBS. .

We have also identified that there are modules where we perhaps over assess our students. This is especially the case when it comes to overall word counts for 10 credit modules. We have begun to address this issue with two modules in the 2019/20 academic term having their word counts reduced. This has led to a wider discussion about the make-up of our assessments and making them both appropriate and fit for purpose. We will continue to review each module and make adjustments where required to either reduce the word count or change the assessment methodology.

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:

It is very pleasing to hear that the hard work the team has put in over the last three years has been recognised and that through such work, our core purpose has been strengthened.

Although, we understand that there is still more work to do concerning assessment policies and the consistency in the feedback we give to students, we are in a good position to move these areas forward and further improve the student education experience.

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:

We have made good ground in this area and have focused in incorporating more research led content within our modules. This is not always easy, as our modules, by their nature, are practical and experiential. However, there is more we can do and over the next twelve months, we will be focusing on employability research to ensure that students get the maximum benefit from the LEED module 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:

As discussed previously, we have made great strides with our assessment procedures and the supporting documentation that we provide students. We have introduced two reflective writing workshops that were well attended and feedback from which was overwhelmingly positive. The approach of actively engaging with students on assessment matters is one that we will continue. For example, this academic year we have written two new support documents focused on areas that students continue to find difficult – Reflective Writing and Goal Setting.

We acknowledge that the terminology within some of our assessment criteria's may not compare, like for like, with others that you may have seen at other institutions. However, (as noted earlier on in our response) we remain committed to a programme of ongoing improvement and improving consistency of approach as widely as possible, which will help when developing relationships beyond FBS.

As identified earlier, we are currently reviewing the assessment methodologies across our entire module portfolio. This is to assess the appropriateness and length of the assessments we produce. This may lead to changes in approach, but these changes will only be made in consultation with students and with the best interests of student learning and education in mind. This should be completed by the end of semester one of 2019/20.

The consistency in feedback quantity and style is an area that we have improved over the last three years, but accept that there is further work to be done. To that end, this year we have changed the structure of our criteria to include:

- Grade Breakdown – At the end of each category within the assessment criteria, we have now added a “your grade” section. Here, students will be given an indicative grade for their work in that area.
- Feedback and Feedforward – We have separated the written feedback section into two specific areas. In the feedback section, students will get feedback on their work highlighting areas in which they have excelled

or are a little weaker. The feedforward section will provide students with suggestions on how they could improve their work in the future.

We are confident that these changes will help staff become more consistent and that students receive higher quality feedback from their work.

We will also look to address the employability gap through the introduction of employability research in reflective modules or ones where gaining industry specific skills is a major learning outcome. This type of work is completed elsewhere in the service and joining up that best practice should help enormously..

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 understand that the process of accessing students' work and other documentation is a challenge when not on campus and not particularly user-friendly. Other external examiners have expressed similar concerns to those that you have raised. We hope that IT will address this feedback and streamline their processes so that access for all external examiners is improved in the future.

We would also like to place on record our thanks to _____ for hard work and diligence through the academic year.

Other comments

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

We will strive to improve the diversity of the teaching team within the LEED teaching team. As a very small team, we have logistical constraints in terms of resource and capacity. However, we will endeavour, wherever possible to engage with a range of different guest lecturers, speakers and instructors that reflect the diversity in our student cohort.

Finally, we would like to place on record our thanks and gratitude to _____ for support and guidance during _____ time as our External Examiner. _____ has always sought to provide detailed insight and guidance to staff and our programme has developed and grown in no small part to _____ expertise.