

The University of Leeds

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2018-19

QAT Received 01/07/2019

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Title and Name of Examiner:

Faculty / School of:

Faculty of Biological Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences

Subject(s):

Sport and Exercise Sciences

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – all programme variants:
MSci, BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – all programme variants:
BSc Sports Science in Relation to Medicine – all programme variants:
(Biomechanics and Psychology Modules)

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

MSci / BSc

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 is taught by tutors who are research active and who clearly integrate this into their teaching. There is a strong clinical focus, which reflects the nature of the Faculty, particularly in the biomechanics modules. Project module topics are cutting edge and again reflect the research activities of the School. The examination board was very competently chaired and decisions made in accordance with the regulations.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.
n/a as first year of External Examining

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 only

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiner Handbook?	Y
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous External Examiners' reports and the School's responses to these?	Y
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor? <i>Although I know Dr Keith Tolfrey, who acted as a mentor.</i>	N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment only – n/a

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

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?	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><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>The programme is well designed with the innovative practice of students being able to go on a complete the MSci should they achieve a high enough average. It covers all fundamental disciplines of sport and exercise science, with a foundation of research methods, and has a strong clinical focus that reflects the nature of the Faculty.</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>Yes, particularly 3rd year modules and the research projects reflect the strong research culture of the university/faculty/school.</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> <p>The team may wish to apply for BASES BUES status, if the course is not already endorsed.</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<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>Assignments are varied and appear challenging, with the number being manageable by students. The School uses rubrics to inform students of the marking criteria, and which are used as part of the feedback to students. Ways in which tutors highlight which rubric category a student's work falls into vary between tutors, with some being neater and more informative than others. Feedback/forward is also hand written in the scripts and at the end of the rubric sheet, with only a few modules opting for work processed comments. This is surprising and no longer common practice,</p>		

and the team need to strongly consider adopting a policy of word processed comments across all work, as recommended in recent external examiner reports. This would benefit the student, particularly for written comments that are not easily read, and should ease administrative processes for returning work to students as well as internal moderation.

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 team should be commended on over 80% of their students achieving 'good honours (i.e. 1st and 2.1). This is comparable to one other sport department that I have externally examined at and exceeds a number of others.

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

I saw little evidence of internal moderation in the majority of modules that I looked at. Sometimes the signature of (presumably) a moderator was evident. The School should move to having a front sheet that details the number of scripts moderated, whether marks are agreed, whether feedback/forward is adequate and, for example, whether any further action is needed. This should be printed off and included in the pack for each module presented to external examiners.

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? <i>Awards Board only</i>	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></p> <p>Processes and decisions were carried out in accordance with the Board's regulations. Tutors should consider not including a '9' as a final module grade. It is unlikely that essay/report style assignments can be marked to within, for example, 5% so tutors should be able to decide whether a student's performance on a module is in the lower or the higher classification. Removing '9's may also reduce the number of students missing out on a higher classification by 1% on a module.</p>		

Other comments

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

In would be really helpful on future visits is paper copies of the following could be placed alongside the sample examination scripts, to go with the on-line coursework:

- Module handbook, including assessment instructions and marking criteria;
- Module statistics (mean, SD, number in each category, and ideally individual student grades, along with how performance has changed in recent years) – currently this can be accessed by external examiners via TED, but should be printed off by the module leader;
- Student/staff end of unit evaluation (ideally).

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 (Biomechanics)

Programme(s) / Module(s):

BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – all programme variants;
MSci, BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences – all programme variants;
BSc Sports Science in Relation to Medicine.

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

MSci/ BSc

Title and Name of Responder:

Position*:

Programme Leader for Sport and Exercise Sciences

Faculty / School of:

Faculty of Biological Sciences, School of 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) must be sent 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

Thank you for your positive comments in support of our programme. We are very pleased that you can clearly see how our research permeates our programme, as this is something we pride ourselves on. There is a strong clinical focus, which we consider to be a real strength of our programme, and in many of our projects our students are working in highly research active labs, which adds to the excellent student experience we provide at Leeds. Thank you for the positive comments regarding the examination board, and our adherence to regulations and processes set out by the University. We strive to ensure we deal with assessment procedures in line with our Faculty's Code of Practice of Assessment (COPA) as this ensures a parity in the assessment experience of all our students.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

n/a

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 are pleased to hear that you have been provided with the information you need to act as our external examiner. We should highlight that _____ had agreed to act as a mentor, albeit informally. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us. We are sure with your support our programme will go from strength to strength, and we will maintain our sector leading position.

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 work hard as a team to maintain the high standards of our programme, and therefore appreciate this positive feedback. We particularly appreciate this positive feedback at a time when we have been making significant changes to our programme. Given your comment, I will discuss with the programme team your recommendation to have our programme accredited by BASES.

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 last few years to develop our assessment strategies, to ensure a 'mixed assessment diet', and to ensure they are aligned to our learning outcomes. In addition, the assessment proforma's have been developed with our students and we are also seeing the benefits of the implementation of those across our programme. We appreciate your concerns regarding hand-written feedback sheets. While we have made moves towards typed feedback/ feedforward sheets for some assessments/ modules, we understand your concerns that these have not been implemented more widely across the programme. This academic year the programme team piloted electronic feedback in our tutorial module (SPSC 2218) and we received very positive comments about this from staff and students alike. We agreed at our recent programme group away-day that we would have typed feedback (via word or Grademark) in place for all modules this coming academic year and are in the process of working with staff and our student support team to convert all our marking criteria into a rubric that can be used within Grademark. Therefore, we are confident that we should be in a position to report that this has been addressed by this time next year.

We apologise that it is not always clear when coursework and exams have been moderated. This work is moderated, and we follow our code of practice for assessment (COPA) procedure, with check markers required to sign the script, if they agree with the primary markers grade (+/- 5%). This is outlined on our 'standard operating procedures' document that is given to each assessor. We will remind staff though our programme meeting that check markers should sign the scripts that they have check-marked, following the procedures outlined in our code of practice (COPA).

With respect to your suggestion regarding having additional information for each module concerning the number of scripts being moderated etc. Currently, 10 or 10% (whichever is greater) of scripts are forwarded to our check markers, which includes examples from each degree class (40 – 100) plus all fails. The signature of each check marker on the front of the script should indicate which scripts have been reviewed, and a signature indicating that the feedback is appropriate and the mark agreed. If marks are not agreed this is discussed with the assessment lead who may appoint a third marker. Thus, we will discuss your suggestion with our colleagues in the Student Education Service, who support us in all our assessment procedures. It may be we can distil the information we already have, albeit it in a different format, onto a single information sheet.

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:

Once again we are pleased to hear that there is a transparency to how we make our decisions, and that these are made in line with our procedures set out in our COPA. We appreciate the comment about avoiding a '9' for a final module grade, particularly when it can potentially have a significant impact on classification criteria. In most of our modules our assessment comprises more than one piece of work, thus a '9' can be a result of a numerical average or 3 pieces of work, or an individual mark that has been scaled, as it might only be 25% of the module. Thus even if we remove the '9' when marking initially, it may be that a final module mark of 9 is awarded. Given your comment I think our next best step is to have a discussion about the use of our marking rubrics, particularly as we have had an influx of new staff to the programme.

Other comments

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

We are committed to providing you with all the necessary information you need to undertake your role as our External Examiner. We will liaise with the Student Education Service to ensure you have the additional information you have outlined in your report.