

Periodic Review Report Template

Faculty Health & Life Sciences

Discipline Name Sports Sciences

Date of Review 20 & 21 March 2013

Review Panel

(approved by Review Sub-Committee)

Internal Membership

Dr. Pamela Davies (Chair): Programme Director, Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences.
 Dr. Paul Oman: Principal Lecturer, Mathematics & Statistics; Faculty of Engineering & Environment.
 Chris Tait: Programme Manager, Physiotherapy; Faculty of Health & Life Sciences.
 Hannah Horne: Students' Union; Vice President, Welfare & Equality.

External Membership

Professor Richard Tong: Director of Learning & Teaching, Sport Science; Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Facilitator

Sally Iles: Academic Co-ordinator Review, Academic Quality

Method of Review

This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined in Northumbria's Review Handbook (February 2012 version), available from <http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/review/intrev/>

Notes:

- Review reports are expected to be short and succinct, typically 3 to 4 sides of A4
- Sections highlighted in blue below, together with the header above, make up the published summary of this review. This will be published on the University's Teaching Quality Information web pages (<http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/tqinf/>)

Section 1

Discipline Aims and Context

General discipline aims and context

This academic provision aims to address the multidimensional nature of sport and to provide high-quality, theoretically-driven, vocationally-focused programmes that will equip graduates with the key skills, knowledge and competencies required by today's employers. All programmes within the Departments aim to create graduates who are able to demonstrate up-to-date, subject-specific knowledge, a range of practical competencies and independent critical thinking. The programmes are all underpinned by a research-informed approach to teaching, promoting the development of applied skills, and placing the student at the forefront of current debates through industry relevant applications, placements and other experiential activities.

From 1979, with a founding BA (Hons) Sport Studies degree, the provision has grown to meet industry demands and there are now a distinct set of pathways for academic study with the offer currently incorporating 7 undergraduate programmes, 6 postgraduate degrees (with a further two undergoing validation) and a Professional Doctorate.

The discipline covers two closely related departments: Sport Development (SD) and Sport and Exercise Sciences (SES). In the period under review the departments have been part of the School of Life Sciences which was formed in 2010 following the merger between the School of Applied Science and the School of

Psychology and Sport Sciences. In 2012/13 the School of Life Sciences merged with the School of Health, Community and Education Studies to form the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. This re-organisation will also lead to departmental restructure, with the discipline joining Physiotherapy to become the Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation.

The discipline has continued to recruit to target in all undergraduate programmes as well as increasing its postgraduate provision in both areas of the discipline. Northumbria has become the first UK institution to offer a named Professional Doctorate in Sport. Additionally the discipline offers bespoke learning programmes for a range of leading sport organisations and national governing bodies of sport, through the development of a Professional Practice Framework, e.g. the BSc (Hons) PPTCM (for Lawn Tennis Association coaches). A project from the SD Department, 'The Coach Development Journey and Idiosyncratic Pathway' has secured £26,856 of funding from the HEFCE SDF's transition fund, to support the continuous professional development of sport coaches, through a range of learning modes. Programmes offered by the provision are as follows:

- BSc (Hons) Applied Sport and Exercise Science
- BSc (Hons) Applied Sport Science with Coaching
- BSc (Hons) Sport, Exercise and Nutrition
- MSc Clinical Exercise Physiology
- BSc (Hons) Sport Coaching
- BSc (Hons) Sport Management
- BA (Hons) Sport Development with Coaching
- BSc (Hons) Professional Practice in Tennis Coaching Management
- MSc Athlete Lifestyle Support - not active 2012/13
- MSc and PGDip Professional Practice in Sport Coaching (replacing MSc Sport Coaching)
- MSc International Sport Management
- MSc Sport Marketing
- Professional Doctorate (DSport)

The discipline has formal partnerships with many prestigious overseas partners including Memoranda of Understanding with institutes in North America, Asia and Australasia. The SD Department currently offers a franchise programme whereby students study the Higher Diploma in Sport & Recreation Management and subsequently undertake a further 180 credits with Northumbria to receive a BSc (Hons) Sport Management degree. The discipline also works with many institutes across Europe and has very active Erasmus agreements including staff and student exchanges. Where possible a programme is accredited or endorsed by the relevant professional body. As well as having a vocational focus, a thriving research environment has emerged, with the discipline increasing its depth and volume of research substantially since the 2008 research assessment exercise; strengthening activities within its Sport, Exercise and Wellbeing.

The above developments have been underpinned by strategic investment in high quality staff with excellent research profiles, teaching experience and professionally relevant expertise within the discipline. The staffing profile in Sport and Exercise Sciences includes 2 Professors, 3 Readers, 2 Principal Lecturers, 6 Senior Lecturers, 1 Senior Lecturer (0.2 FTE), 8 Lecturers, 1 Research Associate; in Sport Development the staffing profile comprises 4 Principal Lecturers (1 also a Teaching Fellow), 1 Teaching Fellow, 8 Senior Lecturers, 7 Lecturers (6.6 FTE), 5 Graduate Tutors. The discipline caters for 1057 full time and 38 part time undergraduate students and 47 full time and 31 part time postgraduate students.

There has been investment in a £30 million sport and exercise facility (Sport Central) which opened in 2011. This facility comprises high specification sport/exercise sciences and coaching laboratories for both teaching and research activities, with further investment of £1 million for research equipment. Many academic modules are housed within this facility which provides a dedicated suite of laboratories (for physiology, biomechanics, performance analysis, gait, integrated performance, nutrition, strength and conditioning) and a sprint track, and complements facilities in the Northumberland Building (Environment Chamber, Neuroscience laboratory, Body Composition laboratory). Students are able to access cutting-edge equipment in a world-class environment. In 2010, the laboratories were awarded BASES Laboratory Accreditation, a quality assurance process that provides researchers, clients, professional bodies and service purchasers with a means of confirming the appropriateness of a laboratory to conduct physiological and biomechanical testing. Provision of library resources and facilities is also excellent, with ongoing investment in relevant library stock of both text and journal resources.

The panel acknowledged that this particular review was taking place during a period of significant restructuring of academic and support structures and roles. Despite this, the panel noted that enthusiasm

and energy of a strong and collegiate team who were embracing change. The panel encourages the Department to utilise restructuring as an opportunity to further exploit their well-established ability to engage with and embrace other disciplines as the Faculty/Department focuses on where it wants to be in the next 5 years. In the context of aims and context, the panel wished to recognise the following:

- The staff resource, particularly the recruitment of new research active staff (via SIF but also through cultivating the discipline's own students).
- The physical resource, specifically the fully equipped, high standard, state of the art sport facilities which are purpose built and well-designed for teaching sport in the 21st century and in close proximity to teaching accommodation.
- Breadth and scope of provision: increase in numbers and programmes with current focus on the growth of postgraduate provision.
- Internationalisation: most programmes have an international flavour with a mix of international students in addition to other international activity which is being engaged with.
- The positive approach to the use of the eLP as a learning and teaching tool which was perhaps undersold in the SED.

Section 2	Curricula and Standards
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The Panel identified the following strengths:

- A developing reputation for attracting and retaining high quality students and staff.
- An increasingly attractive offer supported by the embedded employability opportunities/strategies (as evidenced in league tables).
- A responsive and proactive discipline as evidenced by the external examiner reports and student representatives.
- Engagement with professional bodies to secure accreditation/endorsement.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- Focussing efforts on postgraduate markets by capitalising on their regional/national/international connections with professional organisations and associated marketing.
- Strengthening employer input into curriculum design and delivery possibly through the creation of an employers' forum.
- Revisiting how the chemistry module is taught at level 4 (CS0004 *Chemistry for Life Sciences*) to explore how it could be tailored to the needs of the sports science and nutrition students (checking it is still fit for purpose and whether dedicated seminars could be utilised to improve student learning/engagement).
- Continue to rationalise the organisation of placement opportunities, including providers in that discussion (linked to a possible employers' forum).

Section 3	Management Information Trends
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The Panel identified the following strengths:

- Forecasting models have been used for timely recruitment of appropriate staff to support programme delivery.
- There is evidence that the actions taken in response to previous NSS results have resulted in improved satisfaction scores.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- Continue to be proactive in growing postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and continuing professional development activity.

Section 4	Student Experience
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The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The students consistently praised the staff and the constancy and accessibility of student support.
- There is a strongly embedded support system which includes the Student Support and Advice Centre and Faculty online resources.

- Where guest lecturing occurred, it was appreciated by the students and they would welcome more.
- There is a robust system of attendance monitoring which is used as a tool for exploring cohort engagement.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- To revisit the allocation of dissertation supervisors on a first come, first served basis (e.g. sport sciences).
- To explore further opportunities to support students in gaining vocational qualifications within the programmes (e.g. embedding it into academic development week; and exploring as an additional element of the placement experience).
- To strengthen the relationship, communication and partnership with employers by engaging all stakeholders more fully in the module aims, learning outcomes, assessment and support processes (e.g. perhaps considering a tripartite contract).
- To review the strategic relationship with Team Northumbria and capitalise on potential benefits for the student experience.

Section 5

Enhancement Strategies

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The panel commends approaches to improve skills and competencies, throughout the student journey, which enhance the employment prospects of the students.
- The panel was impressed with the innovative approaches, using new technology, to develop essential core academic skills.
- The whole ethos of research informed learning and teaching is evidenced through the Learning and Teaching Forum driven and supported by the Teaching Fellows.
- The support for staff from initial induction and beyond, including peer mentoring and the active engagement of early career staff with this provision.
- The embedding of the eLP standard which was consistently apparent on programme and module sites including the sharing of EE reports and module evaluations.
- The academic development week which engaged both students and staff and which staff are further developing to attract more students.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- To ensure new structures continue to facilitate collegial approaches to enhancement and staff development.
- To maintain engagement with developing approaches to electronic submission and feedback.

Section 6

Discipline Response to Report

Curricula and standards

A marketing strategy document has been completed for sport programmes in consultation with the Faculty Marketing Manager. This will enable several new avenues of recruitment to be explored nationally. The newly formed Faculty International Group has undertaken various activities to focus efforts for international recruitment onto postgraduate programmes within the Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation. These have included, for example, market intelligence into which regions/countries and markets may attract potential postgraduate students and the compilation of country-specific marketing plans. A well-received employer forum was held in February 2014 for final year undergraduate students and on-going engagement with employers has taken place throughout the 2013-14 academic year. The interim action plan for level 4 Chemistry modules has been operationalised with performance and engagement on this module being continually reviewed.

Management information trends

A marketing strategy document has been completed for postgraduate sport programmes in consultation with the Faculty Marketing Manager and market intelligence is currently being gathered regarding the demand for postgraduate provision in sport and exercise medicine. Development of the professional practice awards has taken place, with students from British Tennis joining the MSc Professional Practice in

Sport Coaching programme in 2014/15.

Student experience

A new sports and exercise medicine-based module has been approved at Faculty-level and will run as an alternative to the 40 credit dissertation module in 2014-15. Vocational and professional skills provision has been enhanced and is under continued development: for example the 'skills passport' has been implemented for the current academic year with all Level 4 undergraduate sport coaching students having received courses on: first aid, disability awareness, safe guarding and Disclosure and Barring Service. Discussions are underway with a leading health and fitness industry training provider to offer professional awards at a discounted rate to sport science students.

Enhancement strategies

The Department has Teaching Champion representation on Faculty and University Enhancement Committees with information cascaded as appropriate. Two Departmental Learning, Learning and Teaching and Assessment Forums took place during 2013-14, run by the Departmental Learning and Teaching Champion and the Department Teaching Fellow. There will be continued provision of Teaching and Learning Workshops at Department level as well as new provision of Faculty-wide Teaching and Learning Workshops. There has been a delay at University-level in terms of strategic implementation of a new Electronic Submission And Feedback (ESAF) framework, however one of our level 7 modules has been included in the current ESAF pilot (2013-14 semester 2).