

SECTION 10

APPENDIX (A10.6) EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM – examiners in the final year of their appointment



Durham University
External Examiner Annual Report Form
www.durham.ac.uk/external.examiners/

The University is grateful to its external examiners for their completion in full of this report. The report consists of questions where external examiners are asked to choose from a fixed range of responses, and questions where free text comments are requested. In respect of the latter this form includes a number of prompts for consideration/discussion as 'greyed out' text. These are intended to be suggestive rather than prescriptive, and external examiners are invited to comment on any issue they feel is relevant. To complete the free text questions, please click on the relevant section and you will automatically 'over-type' 'greyed-out' text.

External Examiners should feel free to make any comments they wish, including observations on teaching, module/programme structure and content, and degree schemes as well as assessment procedures. As the reports of external examiners are discussed widely within the University, we should be most grateful if external examiners would ensure that individual staff members or students are not referred to by name in their reports. Reports will normally be available for discussion widely within the University (including with student representatives via staff-student consultative committees), and may also be requested by certain external bodies, including the Quality Assurance Agency. An additional separate and confidential report may be sent to the Vice-Chancellor if the examiner considers this to be appropriate.

In accordance with the practice at most universities, payment of the examiner's fee is conditional upon receipt of satisfactorily completed Annual Report Forms and at the end of term of office of the separate final report. External examiners are requested to submit their forms within 4 weeks of the final meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Note: moderators of undergraduate programmes in Combined Honours and Natural Sciences are asked to complete only the sections of this form which are applicable.

Further information on External Examiner's Report, Fee and Claim forms, and on the External Examining process in general, can be found at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/external.examiners/>

Please email completed report forms to external.examiners@durham.ac.uk

To ensure that you are paid correctly, please enter all of the programme(s) for which you acted as external examiner

Name of External Examiner	
Academic Year	2013/14
Level of Programmes Examined*	POSTGRADUATE or UNDERGRADUATE/INTEGRATED MASTERS
Programme(s) Examined	<i>Criminal Law, Law, Gender & Society, Law, Sex and Crime, Evidence & Crim Process, UG dissertations</i>

* external examiners who consider both undergraduate/integrated masters programmes *and* taught postgraduate programmes should complete two report forms

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ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1:

Delete as appropriate

a	Did you receive University policy and procedures relating to examinations and assessment?	yes
b	Did you receive the external examiners' handbook and/or documentation on the University code of practice on external examining / moderating?	yes
c	Did you receive the relevant core regulations (including university level and qualification descriptors and generic assessment criteria)?	yes
d	Did you receive the relevant degree Programme Regulations?	no
e	Did you receive the relevant Programme Specification(s) and module outlines from the Department?	yes
f	Did you receive the Programme Assessment Criteria from the Department?	no
g	Did you receive all the draft examination papers for comment?	yes
h	Was the nature and level of the questions on draft examination papers appropriate?	yes
i	If you had comments on draft examination papers, were these addressed to your satisfaction?	yes
j	Was a sufficient sample of examination scripts made available to you?	yes/no
k	Was a sufficient sample of assessed coursework made available to you?	yes
l	Was assessed work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for award of given marks?	yes/no
k	<p>Please give further details below about any aspects of the issues referred to above. In particular, if you were not satisfied in relation to any of these issues please explain what you felt could be improved, if you found any aspect of this provision especially useful you may wish to give some examples of good practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some of the exam scripts sent to me were not accompanied by the relevant exam paper. 2. I felt that some of the feedback on assessed work was on the minimal side, particularly when there were no comments written on the assessed work itself. 3. Regarding the number of scripts, there was a problem with the marking of criminal law this year where one of the three markers was felt by the law school to have been harsher than the other two. Marks were adjusted by the school to address this. I was asked to approve this process. Having only seen a small number of scripts it was not possible for me to check the arithmetical exercise completed by the school to work out the average marks of each marker. Also, the adjustment of marks (raising the lower marks) was a decision made by the school, which I was asked to approve. Since the school has the power to make some adjustment, and I could not really check the internal process, it is difficult to see why my approval was being sought except to rubber stamp something that had already been processed. Linked to this is the question of my role more generally – it seems that external examiners are not permitted to change marks but I was not sure whether 	

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	<p>this meant I was allowed to 'suggest' any changes at all. One batch of scripts sent to me contained quite a few borderline marks and I gave these particular attention, thinking that I was being asked to give a view on whether they should be moved up a band. However it became clear that this was not the case and I think I am right in saying that I can only suggest a mark if there has been a disagreement between the two internal markers. However I would appreciate some clear written guidance on this.</p>
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QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE AWARD

For the questions that follow please use the following scale:

1 (no/hardly at all)

2 (generally)

3 (consistently/fully)

2:

Delete as appropriate

a	To what extent do the aims and objectives (intended learning outcomes) of the programme align with the subject benchmarks?	3
b	To what extent does the design of the curriculum enable the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be met?	3
c	Are the standards of the programme consistent with those required by the university qualification descriptors and so with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications?	3
d	Were the academic standards of student work comparable with similar programmes with which you are familiar?	3
e	Do the assessment criteria permit a confident judgement of student achievement against the learning outcomes?	3
f	Was the marking consistent with the assessment criteria?	3
g	Did the assessment policies and procedures appear to you to be appropriate?	3
h	Were the assessment policies and procedures adhered to?	3
i	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations/major projects appropriate?	3

3. Please give further details about any aspects of the programme or its assessment relevant to the topics covered in question 2a-2i above. In particular where you have indicated 1 or 2 on the scale to questions 2a-2i please explain what you felt could be improved; where you have indicated 3 it would be helpful if you could particularly highlight examples of good practice.

4. Please comment on the quality of students' work, the quality of the awards made (including the classes for undergraduate degrees and distinction for postgraduate degrees) and comparability with other institutions.

The programmes and teaching appear to be of high quality. Student work was consistently of a high standard, and awards given were in line with what I would see at [REDACTED], and at other institutions I have externally examined for.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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5. Please comment on the management of the assessment process, e.g. the provision of samples of student work, the operation of the Board of Examiners and the level of involvement of the external examiner in the assessment process.

My communication with the school about the external examining was frequent and helpful, from approving exam papers to examining the work itself, and I appreciated this as it was my first year externalling for Durham.

I note that some of the turn around times for marking were tight, particularly towards the end of the diet.

Regarding the clarity of my role, as noted above – it seems that external examiners are not permitted to 'change' marks but I was not sure whether this meant I was allowed to 'suggest' any changes at all. One batch of scripts sent to me contained quite a few borderline marks and I gave these particular attention, thinking that I was being asked to give a view on whether they should be moved up a band. However it became clear that this was not the case and I think I am right in saying that I can only suggest a mark if there has been a disagreement between the two internal markers. However I would appreciate some clear written guidance on this.

Regarding equal treatment of students, the school made some adjustments to the criminal law marks this year as a result of concerns that one marker was unduly harsh. I have never seen this done before and was surprised that this was something that the school had power to do. I would say that normally markers would work together at the beginning of the marking process, marking a few and comparing marks, to agree a common approach, rather than waiting until the end of the marking and the school having to step in to make any necessary adjustments, which then become more arbitrary unless all the exam papers are actually read and marked again, which in this case they were not. Perhaps this was an anomaly, but could be avoided in future years by more rigorous processes at the start of the marking process. I was not able to be present at the Board of Examiners.

PROGRAMME(S) DESIGN AND OPERATION

6. Please add any comments on other aspects of the learning, teaching or assessments of the programme(s). These may include: curriculum design; modes of learning, teaching or assessment; learning resources; links between research and teaching; suitability of the programme as preparation for study at the next level (Masters or PhD as appropriate); suitability of the programme as a preparation for employment; alignment with the requirements of professional bodies (if applicable).

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

THESE QUESTIONS NEED ONLY BE ANSWERED BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES (e.g. articulation agreements, validations, multiple awards, joint awards)

7a. Were you offered sufficient information about the collaborative partnership?

7b. Did you have the opportunity to compare the achievement of students on the collaborative programme with those of students taught on programmes delivered solely by the University? If YES, were the standards achieved by students on the two types of programme comparable? If NO, do the academic standards achieved by the students indicate that appropriate learning opportunities are being provided through the collaborative partnership?

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GOOD PRACTICE FOR DISSEMINATION

8. Please highlight any examples of good or effective practice that you have identified in the programmes and modules which you examine, that are worthy of particular commendation and wider dissemination within Durham University.

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PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE LAST YEAR

9. If you raised any issues for further consideration or action in your last report, have these been effectively considered by the academic department/school in which you are examining? Have you received a response from the academic department/school indicating the action taken in response to your comments and recommendations? If you raised issues regarding University policy and practice, have you received a response to this from the relevant University faculty?

N/A

FURTHER COMMENTS – OPTIONAL

10. If you wish to provide any further comments, in relation to the questions above, or to provide additional information not covered in this form, please feel free to do so in the box below.

As noted above, some of the feedback to students appeared to me to be in the minimal side, particularly regarding assessed essays.

FINAL OVERVIEW [Please Complete only if this is your final year]

11. At the end of their term of appointment all external examiners are asked to comment on the provision they are responsible for, in relation to their full term of appointment. These comments should relate to the examiner's overall views of issues relating to the quality and standards of the provision for which they are responsible.

This is likely to include the following aspects of quality and standards with which you have been involved:

- the curriculum;
- availability and use of resources;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the student cohorts;
- the quality of teaching and learning;
- the overall quality of the students' learning experience;
- failure prior to the final Level of the programme for undergraduate programmes and exit at Diploma level for postgraduate programmes;
- the overall standard of student achievement (with reference if appropriate to the entry requirements of the programme).

In addition you may want to comment on the following areas:

- How we might consider developing our teaching, learning and assessment policies and procedures.
- The way in which the department responded to your comments during your period as external examiner and, if not, what could be done to improve this.
- If you were involved in discussion with the department on any of the following:
 - curriculum design
 - modes of teaching and learning
 - modes of assessment
 - advising on a new programme

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- advising on a new module(s)
- other general issues
- Whether you were satisfied with the way in which the department drew on your expertise.