

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	2014/15
Level of Programmes Examined*	UG
Programme(s) Examined	Law (LLB Hons) Criminal Law; Evidence and Criminal Process; Legal Frontiers; Introduction to International and Comparative Criminal Law; Law, Gender and Society; Dissertations

* 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?	Yes
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?	Yes
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
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
m	<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> <p>Since I am not allowed to change marks, I was surprised at the number of borderline scripts that were sent to me. It would be more consistent to send a random batch of marks, since the only assessment I can make is whether the standards are broadly comparable with those at my own institution. I would like to note how polite and helpful the Law UG Exams Secretary is and thank her for all her support with my duties in the past year.</p>	

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
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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?	2
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?	2
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.

Academic departments/schools are asked to comment on, and respond to, any area where an external examiner has given a 1 or 2 on questions 2a – 2i. Consequently if you are able to explain the reasons why you have given a 1 or 2 response this will be of significant value to the academic department/school in which you are examining.

I have answered '2' to questions d and f above. I am not sure whether it is the academic standards or the marking that is at issue here. I noted in my comments in an email on the examinations marks, sent on 10 June that in all of the modules I was asked to mark, the full range of marks was not used, and a surprisingly small number of papers were given less than a 2.1 mark, which I felt was overly generous. See below.

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.

As mentioned above, I feel that for the modules I was asked to look at, the marks were definitely on the generous side. I do not doubt that Durham students are clever, but I would still have expected to see more students in the 2.2 category and below. It is impossible, without seeing all the scripts for every course, to pick out particular scripts that have been over graded but looking at the spread of marks overall I was surprised to see such a low number of marks below the 2.1 threshold – in one relatively large course, less than 2%. I don't want to pick out that particular module in isolation though as it was an issue across all 4 modules I saw.

I would also like to commend markers who used of innovative teaching methods, such as presentations, and excellent feedback, particularly the Legal Frontiers course.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5. Please comment on the management of the assessment process, e.g. the provision

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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.

I think the Law School's approach to the Board of Examiners is very odd and is not comparable with the approach at either my own institution, previous institutions, or the 6 other institutions for whom I have externally examined. It seems that external examiners are 'required' to attend and need special permission not to attend, and since the dates of meetings are often set long after other commitments such as conferences etc it is unrealistic to expect examiners to cancel other commitments to be at the exam board.

I was appropriately involved at the level of setting summative assessments.

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).

- All modules seemed well designed and executed.
- I also so a batch of dissertations, and was impressed with the standard of these. The marks for these were broadly comparable with those at my own institution.

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

7. n/a: collaborative provision not considered.

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.

See comments at 4 and at 5, above.

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.

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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.

[REDACTED]

I am in general impressed with the standard of student work, and the way in which the examinations process is conducted, subject to my comments about some overly generous marking and possible grade inflation. The quality of teaching and learning appears to be very high.