

**SECTION 6 - APPENDIX (A6.23a) EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S ANNUAL REPORT FORM –
Examiners in the final year of their appointment**

Durham
University

Durham University
External Examiner's 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 addition to this Annual Report, a more detailed written report is required at the end of an examiner's term of office. This final report should be made in the final section of this report. 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.

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	2010/11
Level of Programmes Examined*	Undergraduate
Programme(s) Examined	LLB Law

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

External Examiner's Annual Report Form

DOCUMENTATION RECEIVED

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) from the Department?	Yes
f	Did you receive the Programme Assessment Criteria from the Department?	Yes
g	Please give further details below about any aspects of the documentation received. In particular, if you found any of the documentation insufficiently detailed or informative please explain what you felt could be improved, if you found any documentation especially useful you may wish to give some examples of good practice.	
	Click here and type	

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	Do the assessment criteria permit a confident judgement of student achievement against the learning outcomes?	3
e	Was the marking consistent with the assessment criteria?	3
f	Did the assessment policies and procedures appear to you to be appropriate?	3
g	Were the assessment policies and procedures adhered to?	3

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

External Examiner's Annual Report Form

highlight examples of good practice.

Academic departments are asked to comment on, and respond to, any area where an external examiner has given a 1 or 2 on questions 2a – 2g. 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 in which you are examining.

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.

Student work is of a high quality. There were a large number of first class marks in the scripts I reviews across different modules and many of these were excellent. The dissertations were particularly notable: at their best they were original well researched and interesting.

Individual marks awarded to scripts and essays in modules were comparable to those awarded in other institutions: the standards were comparable.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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.

I was involved in reviewing exam papers for summative assessment, which was appropriate. I found the answer outlines very helpful both in reviewing the exam questions beforehand and the scripts afterwards. I was able to see an extensive sample of work in all classes and this allowed me to reach an informed judgment regarding academic standards which I was satisfied were high. Most scripts appeared to be double-marked. I received very clear guidance from the Chair of the Board of Examiners, for which I was grateful. Special circumstances were dealt with carefully and appropriately-I think the grading system generally works well.

The Board was lengthy, with many students being exhaustively (though obviously anonymously) discussed. This showed great care and the wish to treat students equitably, but it can also be attributed to the broad unguided discretion that Durham boards currently retain. The introduction of guidance on the exercise of discretion next year should greatly assist both boards and external examiners.

It was notable that on a number of occasions the Board awarded firsts to borderline students despite the fact that the external examiners were unanimous that the students should be classified as a 2:1. It is possible therefore that at the 2:1/first borderline the Law School is awarding students firsts when they would not be awarded firsts elsewhere. There will, of course, always be hard cases. This year may be a one-off but the Board should keep this matter under review. I have certainly never seen such a consistent division between the internal members of the board and the external examiners.

The Board was carefully run and due procedures are followed (the Board is not bound to accept the views of the external examiners under the university's regulations).

On one final matter, the rule that a Final year student who gets a mark under 30 cannot obtain an Honours degree seems to be extremely harsh. I realise the university has considered this matter and decided not to alter it but the rationale for this rule, which seems punitive, is unclear.

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 (Master's or PhD as appropriate); suitability of the programme as a preparation for employment; alignment with the requirements of professional bodies (if applicable).

External Examiner's Annual Report Form

- The programme was suitable. The modes of assessment were suitable. There were clear links between research and teaching and students often cited their tutors' work.

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?

- n/a

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?

N/A

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.

- The feedback provided on exam scripts

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 in which you are examining? Have you received a response from the academic department 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 about examinations, 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.

n/a

FINAL OVERVIEW

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

External Examiner's Annual Report Form

relating to the quality and standards of the provision for which they are responsible.

Please see above. A matter on which I have commented in the past was the unguided and broad discretion of exam boards which, I indicated, raised issues about equitable treatment (though I have to say that the Boards I have attended have always made a great effort to treat students fairly). This seems to have been addressed with rules changing next year.
