

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](mailto: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	
<b>Name of External Examiner</b>	<b>[REDACTED]</b>
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
<b>Level of Programmes Examined*</b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATE</b>
<b>Programme(s) Examined</b>	<b>LAW UG FINAL HONOURS</b>
* external examiners who consider both undergraduate/integrated masters programmes <i>and</i> taught postgraduate programmes should complete two report forms	

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1:

Delete as appropriate

## External Examiner's Annual Report Form

a	Did you receive University policy and procedures relating to examinations and assessment?	<b>YES</b>
b	Did you receive the external examiners' handbook and/or documentation on the University code of practice on external examining / moderating?	<b>YES</b>
c	Did you receive the relevant core regulations (including university level and qualification descriptors and generic assessment criteria)?	<b>YES</b>
d	Did you receive the relevant degree Programme Regulations?	<b>YES</b>
e	Did you receive the relevant Programme Specification(s) and module outlines from the Department?	<b>YES</b>
f	Did you receive the Programme Assessment Criteria from the Department?	<b>YES</b>
g	Did you receive all the draft examination papers for comment?	<b>YES</b>
h	Was the nature and level of the questions on draft examination papers appropriate?	<b>YES</b>
i	If you had comments on draft examination papers, were these addressed to your satisfaction?	<b>YES</b>
j	Was a sufficient sample of examination scripts made available to you?	<b>YES</b>
k	Was a sufficient sample of assessed coursework made available to you?	<b>YES</b>
l	Was assessed work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for award of given marks?	<b>YES</b>
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> <p>I received all documents in a very timely fashion, and these were generally very clear and easy to follow. Any issues I raised were in general minor (ie points of clarification about procedure etc) and were responded to quickly and clearly. I did raise a few minor concerns about certain proposed examination questions, and these were dealt with to my complete satisfaction.</p> <p>With regard to question 'l' above, while I can say that assessed work was certainly marked in such a way as to enable me to see the reasons for award of given marks, I did feel on occasion that slightly more detailed comments should have been given. This was particularly the case in the context of the dissertations I reviewed. Here I felt that – <i>in some instances only</i> – more detailed comments would have been appropriate, particularly as these marksheets are returned to the students to act as summative feedback. Given the amount of work that goes into a dissertation, it is important that students receive detailed comments (at my own institution comments on dissertations commonly run to 3 pages). I communicated this point to the chair of the exam board, who quickly responded to this and told me that the comment would be passed on to markers. It should be noted that, overall, this was a minor point of concern. Nonetheless, I felt I should raise it again here.</p>	

## External Examiner's Annual Report Form

### 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?	<b>3</b>
b	To what extent does the design of the curriculum enable the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be met?	<b>3</b>
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?	<b>3</b>
d	Were the academic standards of student work comparable with similar programmes with which you are familiar?	<b>3</b>
e	Do the assessment criteria permit a confident judgement of student achievement against the learning outcomes?	<b>3</b>
f	Was the marking consistent with the assessment criteria?	<b>3</b>
g	Did the assessment policies and procedures appear to you to be appropriate?	<b>3</b>
h	Were the assessment policies and procedures adhered to?	<b>3</b>
i	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations/major projects appropriate?	<b>3</b>

**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.**

I was entirely satisfied with the suitability of the assessment process. The aims and objectives of the programme are consistent with comparable awards elsewhere and the assessment procedures and criteria were appropriate for assessing these. No further comments to add here.

**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.**

I felt that the standard of the student work I saw was very high (though of course a significant proportion of the scripts referred to me were of first class standard). Some of the dissertations evidenced very high level autonomous research and writing skills. Another point of note was that some of the first class answers to a question about '*jus cogens*' on the 'Public International Law' exam were answered in such an original and knowledgeable manner that I commented on this the Board of Examiners.

I felt that quality work – of which I saw a notable amount - was recognised with appropriately high marks, but I did not see any 'easy' firsts either. Overall, the proportion of first class degrees was somewhat higher than has been common at my own institution in recent years, but only marginally so. I have no concerns in this regard.

## External Examiner's Annual Report Form

### 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 felt that my involvement in the approval of assessments was appropriate and that my concerns (which were minor) were dealt with effectively. I was certainly able to see an appropriate sample of work to have an informed view of the marking standards, practices and consistency. Indeed, I was consulted prior to the examination period as to what sample size I would like to view, which was extremely helpful.

I was very pleased by the diligence of the Board of Examiners, particularly when it came to the exercise of its discretion (which was exercised transparently and consistently). There is more discretion available at Durham than at many other institutions (my own included), but the rules and guidelines on how to apply this were communicated to me clearly prior to the meeting (both through useful documentation and a discussion with the Chair of the Board).

### 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).**

I have no particular comments to make here. The modules I reviewed were well designed and required a good balance of knowledge within the appropriate subject area. The overall degree programme is broadly comparable with those offered by other institutions and has a good mixture of learning outcomes and assessment measures. As I noted above, the quality of some of the dissertations I reviewed show that students are being well trained in conducting independent legal research.

### 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

## External Examiner's Annual Report Form

### 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.**

I have no particular comments to add here.

### 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 – this is my first year in the role.

### 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.**

I understand that it is university policy not to allow external examiners the ability to unilaterally alter individual marks unless they have reviewed an entire run of scripts for a module, but this can be extremely frustrating. On the (admittedly, extremely rare) occasions where I felt a mark was incorrect, it is difficult to know what to do about this – it never appeared to me to be a systematic issue, so there seemed little call for systematic remarking. I did flag these few instances where I was unhappy with the mark awarded, but under the current rules of procedure it seems difficult to take this further.

The process in the Board of Examiners meeting of the chair having to read out all non-contentious degree classifications seems rather unnecessary. I believe many institutions (my own included) now simply give the materials confirming marks to the attendees and have tacit agreement that non-contentious classifications are agreed by the meeting. The marks are read so quickly that it would be difficult for attendees to note an error in any event.

The process at the end of the Board of Examiners' meeting of the externals having to sign numerous bit of paper again seems unnecessary. Surely one piece of paper covering all programmes discussed in the meeting would suffice (?)