

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>	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em;"></div>
<b>Academic Year</b>	2011/12
<b>Level of Programmes Examined*</b>	UG
<b>Programme(s) Examined</b>	LLB Law
* 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

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a	Did you receive University policy and procedures relating to examinations and assessment?	Y
b	Did you receive the external examiners' handbook and/or documentation on the University code of practice on external examining / moderating?	Y
c	Did you receive the relevant core regulations (including university level and qualification descriptors and generic assessment criteria)?	Y
d	Did you receive the relevant degree Programme Regulations?	Y
e	Did you receive the relevant Programme Specification(s) and module outlines from the Department?	Y
f	Did you receive the Programme Assessment Criteria from the Department?	Y
g	Did you receive all the draft examination papers for comment?	Y
h	Was the nature and level of the questions on draft examination papers appropriate?	Y
i	If you had comments on draft examination papers, were these addressed to your satisfaction?	Y
j	Was a sufficient sample of examination scripts made available to you?	Y
k	Was a sufficient sample of assessed coursework made available to you?	Y
l	Was assessed work marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for award of given marks?	Y
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>Feedback comments were particularly clear in 2011-12, allowing me to understand why a mark was given. Comments were consistently 'student centred' and prospective, in that they indicated clearly why the work had achieved the given mark and what needed to be done to improve it. At [REDACTED] more space is provided for feedback comments and we are encouraged to provide slightly longer comments than at Durham, but this inevitably involves a balance between the amount of feedback and the duration of the marking process. I would suggest that the concision and focus of feedback comments currently provided at Durham in the courses I have looked at are appropriate and sufficient.</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?	<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.**

**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 general quality of the work I read was very high, demonstrating (at the top of the range) impressive knowledge, understanding and skills.  
 - the range and scope of assessment are very good, clearly drawing on matters from across the course curricula in appropriately challenging ways.  
 - the academic standards achieved by students in the 2.1/1<sup>st</sup> class range are comparable with, and often stronger than, those achieved by students in the other institutions with which I am familiar.  
 - as noted in previous years, there is a tendency and a general readiness to award a higher number of 1<sup>st</sup> class marks than in the other institutions with which I am familiar. This year, the Board of Examiners expressly noted this and, in line with its system of comparative classification (the 'precedents') started to introduce a little more restraint. I think that strong student work deserves a strong classification, but welcome the readiness to try to preserve the significance of the highest awards through a more cautious approach to borderline overall results.

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### 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.**

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- I was satisfied with my level of involvement in the process, the amount and clarity of information provided and the attention of the School to queries. The new QA statement was helpful and the whole assessment process was very well managed.
- I think the system of outline answers works very well and is particularly helpful in the externalising process.
- the change in rules about what an external examiner can now do certainly helped clarify the extent of discretion.
- I have no doubt that students were treated equitably, within year groups and with regard to previous cohorts/ classifications.
- the board of examiners was well run and operated effectively. The readiness to introduce a little more restraint in the award of 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees will hopefully start to reduce the amount of agonizing over some borderline cases, which in other institutions would not be considered due to more rigid rules about eligibility at class boundaries. The board may find it helpful to provide members with an additional written note about its 'rules of engagement' with regard to the exercise of its discretion, in order to clarify the two stage process in deciding (i) whether a case falls within an eligible category, before (ii) exercising discretion.

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### 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).**

- the structure, content and curricula of the modules under consideration are all at a high standard, research led (to the extent possible), challenging and relevant.
- the mooted exercise for the first year legal skills course (which I was asked to look at this year for the first time) was thoughtfully constructed and an exciting assessment method.
- the research-led optional courses I have considered over the past three years provide a strong basis for subsequent research, should a student wish to undertake PG study.
- given that this is a Law programme there are inherent connections with professional standards and employment preparation. On the basis of what I have seen, these criteria are being met very well, but without (as is sometimes the risk) dominating the programme to the exclusion of other more academic/critical elements.

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### 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?**

Key issues include:

- were you informed of the respective roles of Durham and its collaborative partner in the programme(s)?
- were you advised of any variations between the programme offered through the collaborative partnership, and the same or similar programmes offered solely by the University?

**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**

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students indicate that appropriate learning opportunities are being provided through the collaborative partnership?

Click here and type

### 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.**

- as mentioned above, feedback comments are useful and well-balanced (indicating development over the past three years of my earlier reports).

- the attention to fairness and consistency in exam boards with regard to degree classifications is commendable.

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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.**

A final word of thanks to the members of the administrative team in the Law School for their efficiency and attention during my time as external examiner.