External Examiner Report Form for Taught Programmes 2018-19

As well as answering the specific yes/no questions, external examiners are asked to provide qualitative comments in each section, to assist the University, School and the programme team in managing standards and quality effectively. Please also ensure that any recommendations are listed in section 9 of this template.

Please ensure all sections of this form are fully completed where indicated. If a report is considered to be deficient in respect of the information provided, you may be asked for additional comments.

External examiners are asked to write one report for the cluster of programmes at the same level for which they examine and to highlight where comments relate to a specific programme within that cluster. Separate reports for undergraduate and postgraduate level programmes are required.

If the report includes a programme(s) delivered under collaborative arrangements, please provide comments relating to each location(s) of delivery to help inform the University's oversight of the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities when programmes are delivered at collaborative partners.

Please return your report (in this format) by email to the Vice-President (Education), via gsa@soton.ac.uk no more than four weeks after the final Board of Examiners meeting for the academic year of the report. Your report will be acknowledged by a member of the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team and forwarded to the School. If you experience any difficulties completing this form please contact gsa@soton.ac.uk

The programme team will respond to the external examiner’s comments in each section of the report. If a programme offers modules owned by another School/Faculty, each School/Faculty concerned will be given an opportunity to respond to the comments made by the external examiner on this form.

External examiner reports cannot be considered confidential. The University is committed to making its external examiner reports publicly available, and your report will be available to all students. Your report therefore must not name, or otherwise identify any student or staff member on the programme(s) or module(s) that you are reporting on.

If you wish to make a separate confidential report directly to the President and Vice-Chancellor on any matter of serious concern and/or to ask that the report below be considered by the President and Vice-Chancellor directly, please email Vice-Chancellor@soton.ac.uk.

Please note that payment of fees cannot be authorised until a fully completed report form for the year has been received (both reports if you cover both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes). Claim forms for fees and costs/subsistence are available here https://www.southampton.ac.uk/quality/external_examiners/fees.page.

1. External examiner details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Faculty:</th>
<th>Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Life Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of School:</td>
<td>School of Geography and Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of external examiner:</td>
<td>Professor Skye Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External examiner’s home institution:</td>
<td>University of Autumn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Programme(s)/modules(s) examined (please ensure all programmes/modules which this report relates to are listed) | BSc (Hons) Summer  
BSc (Hons) Spring  
MSc Winter |
| Place of delivery (if the programme is not delivered at the University of Southampton): (if ‘other’ selected please state place) | University of Southampton and Dalian Polytechnic University |
2. Threshold academic standards of awards and student achievement

2.1 Are the academic standards and the standards of student achievement in the programme examined comparable with the standards of similar programmes, or parts of programmes, in other UK higher education institutions with which you are familiar?

Yes

2.2 If the programme(s)/module(s) are delivered under collaborative arrangements, are the academic standards and the standards of student achievement comparable with their peers at the University of Southampton UK campus?

Yes

2.3 Are the threshold academic standards for the awards (or award elements) in alignment with the standards set by national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), any relevant Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements and the relevant University programme specification(s)?

Yes

2.4 For those external examiners not in their first year of appointment, are the standards and achievement of students a comparable standard to those in previous years?

N/A

Please expand on your responses above to provide comment on any particular issues or areas of good practice

The academic standards and the standards of student achievement in the programmes are comparable with the standards of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions with which I am familiar.

Student attainment is generally very good and is a very positive reflection of the interesting and well-thought out modules offered, and the enthusiasm and professionalism of the teaching team.

Although the quality is comparable to similar courses delivered in the UK there have been some cultural challenges with the same programme delivered outside of the UK and the programme team and Faculty should ensure this is kept under review and monitored carefully.

Programme Team response to the above:

Click here to enter text.

3. Assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to intended learning outcomes

3.1 Did the assessment methods measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the programme(s) and modules?

Yes

3.2 Please comment on the range and appropriateness of assessment methods, whether assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are set at the appropriate level and whether the assessment criteria are applied appropriately and communicated effectively to students.

The assessment methods have been applied rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the modules and programmes.

There is evidence of a mixed diet of appropriate assessment styles that support the learning strategy and enable a good range of transferable and academic attributes to be tested.
4. Assessment process

4.1 Was the process for assessment, examination and the determination of awards conducted soundly, equitably and fairly in line with the relevant University policies and regulations?

Yes

Please expand on your response above to provide comment on any particular issues or areas of good practice

The assessment of student achievement continues to be rigorous and accurate. The module moderation forms are very comprehensive both in the information that they require and the way in which they are completed. They provide a very useful synopsis of the performance on the module, as well as a clear audit trail.

I would recommend the teaching team give consideration to how evidence of the assessment of presentations/seminars might be provided to the externals where appropriate.

Programme Team response to the above:
Click here to enter text.

5. Application of procedures relating to special considerations and academic integrity

5.1 Was there evidence at the Board of Examiners that the Faculty had considered any Academic Integrity cases as per the University’s regulations?

Yes

5.2 Was there evidence at the Board of Examiners that the Faculty had held a Special Considerations Board, prior to the Board of Examiners, to make specific recommendations on any special circumstances cases received, as per the University’s regulations?

Yes

Please expand on your response above to provide comment on any particular issues or areas of good practice

Individual cases were considered at the Board of Examiners. The processes observed were in-line with those of my own institution. Processes were transparent and followed University policy. A time for appropriate discussion was always offered and this was seen to actively include the externals.

Programme Team response to the above:
Click here to enter text.
6. Curriculum, learning and teaching methods and resources

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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Does the curriculum remain current?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Is the quality and range of learning and teaching methods and resources available to students appropriate?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>If the programme(s)/module(s) are delivered under collaborative arrangements, is the quality and range of learning and teaching methods and resources available to students comparable with their peers at the University of Southampton UK campus?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

Please expand on your responses above to provide comment on any particular issues or areas of good practice:

The curriculum is appropriate to the QAA Subject Benchmark and contains a good balance of modules that ensure coverage of practical, theoretical and thematic knowledge and skills.

The programmes continue to evolve and adapt to the continually changing environment and as such remain relevant and responsive to the industry.

There is an excellent range of teaching methods in each module, including a good use of seminars and presentations to encourage student interaction and engagement.

A few modules use formative assessments to further support student attainment.

Programme Team response to the above:
Click here to enter text.

7. Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements

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<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Do you have any specific comments to raise regarding PSRB requirements relating to the programme(s)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Please expand on your responses above, if appropriate, to provide comment on any particular issues or areas of good practice:

The programmes fully meet the statutory requirements set by the Professional Body and remain current and relevant.

Programme Team response to the above:
Click here to enter text.

8. Checklist and information to assist you to complete your duties

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Did you receive or have appropriate access to programme handbook(s)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Did you receive or have appropriate access to programme regulations (these may be in the programme handbook)?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Did you receive or have appropriate access to module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Did you receive or have appropriate access to all assessment briefs/marking criteria?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Did you receive or have appropriate access to QAA subject benchmarks (where relevant)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>(i) Did you receive all draft examination papers for approval?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) If not, was this by prior arrangement with you?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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9. **Recommendations for the Programme Team, Faculty or the University**

Please list any key recommendations for action to enhance the programme(s) and the quality of learning opportunities provided to students.

Marking is clear and in most cases, the checking of the marking of scripts is clear also. However in some cases, it was not obvious that marking had been checked and indeed some errors in the adding of marks were identified. I recommend emphasising to all staff to note the checking of marks on scripts.

Encourage markers to be more specific in their comments to help the student know where they need to improve.

It would be good to see the inclusion of more creative/presentation skills in assignments.

I would recommend the teaching team give consideration to how evidence of the assessment of presentations/seminars might be provided to the externals where appropriate.

This year some students have struggled with the basic research methods. It may be worth an internal staff discussion to see if any additional support can be provided.

The Library appears to lack some key learning resources. I would recommend a dialogue between the Programme Team and the Library as soon as possible.
Continue to closely monitor the programme delivery overseas to ensure students receive a comparable experience to those in the UK.

**Programme Team response to the above:**

Click here to enter text.

### 10. Innovation and good practice

**On the basis of your involvement in the programme please identify below anything you consider innovative or particularly good practice.**

I am very impressed with the programme team who liaise well to form a cohesive team, are supportive to each other and are all clearly committed to bringing the very best experience to the students.

Procedures are good and clear. The online system for viewing exam papers is particularly noteworthy and facilitates dialogue directly between external and module leaders, which is good.

The preparation at level 5 for the level 6 self-directed major project seems to me to be particularly worthy of note in that it effectively links the two FHEQ levels as well as providing an effective framework to ensure students meet the benchmark threshold for the subject.

The syllabi I read were incredibly detailed and comprehensive. Their strength are particularly the rich links to sources and materials as well as the comprehensive bibliographies.

**Programme Team response to the above:**

Click here to enter text.

### 11. Recommendations made in previous report(s)

If relevant, please state below whether comments made in your previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to your satisfaction.

All comments made previously appear to have been given due consideration, and implemented where appropriate.

**Programme Team response to the above:**

Click here to enter text.

### 12. First annual report – complete only in your first year of office

Please give a brief overview of your first year in office as external examiner with the University and comment on the effectiveness of the arrangements for your induction.

I was very happy with the introduction I received to the University. I received well organised materials and an introduction to Blackboard from one of the administrators. I also had a discussion with the Programme Leader over Skype and was able to ask questions. I met the programme team and some students when I visited for the Board of Examiners. I received everything I needed to fulfil my role as external examiner.

**Programme Team response to the above:**

Click here to enter text.

### 13. Final exit report – complete only at the end of your term of office
Please give a brief overview of your time as external examiner with the University and comment on any significant changes in standards over your term of office and/or any other areas that you feel appropriate to highlight.

Over my time as external examiner it has become very clear to me that the School has been extremely responsive to both my written and verbal contributions. The team care very much about what they are doing and their students outcomes and experience.

**Programme Team response to the above:**
Click here to enter text.

Please comment below on whether any concerns you have raised in your reports during your term of office have been addressed to your satisfaction.

My concerns and comments have been responded to appropriately.

**Programme Team response to the above:**
Click here to enter text.

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For completion by the Faculty:

Once completed and approved by the Faculty, the response is sent to the external examiner, from the University’s central Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT). **A fully approved response should normally be available within 8 weeks of receipt of the report.** If the response is delayed the external examiner can expect to receive an email from the Faculty explaining the reason for this and when the response is expected.

External examiner reports are read by, and discussed within the programme team and other relevant staff in the Faculty. A response to all feedback received is added to this form under the relevant section by the programme team explaining the action taken/to be taken or reasons why action will not be taken. If a programme offers modules owned by another Faculty, each Faculty concerned will be given an opportunity to respond to the comments made by the external examiner on this form.

The Programme Team’s responses are read by the Director of Programmes and approved by the Associate Dean (Education and Student Experience) on behalf of the Faculty Programmes Committee (FPC) as detailed in the relevant boxes below.

**Responses to the report made by** (insert electronic signature or typed name):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position:</th>
<th>Programme Leader/Coordinator on behalf of the programme team</th>
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**Responses to the report read and supported by** (insert electronic signature or typed name):

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<th>Position:</th>
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**Responses to the report approved on behalf of Faculty Programmes Committee by** (insert electronic signature or typed name):

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THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED EXTERNAL EXAMINER’S REPORT AND IS FOR GUIDANCE ONLY

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<tr>
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<th>Associate Dean (Education and Student Experience) (AD(ESE))</th>
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