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| External Examiner Report Form for Taught Programmes 2021-22 |

**This report form is to be used by all external examiners for providing written comments on the taught programmes of the University of Southampton. Please:**

* answer all sections of this form;
* provide qualitative comments in each section, to assist the University, School and the programme team in managing standards and quality effectively;
* include any recommendations in Section 8 of this template;
* write one report for the cluster of programmes at the same level for which you examine and highlight where comments relate to a specific programme within that cluster;
* write a separate report for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, if you examine both;
* comment on any issues you have noticed as a result of a programme being taught in multiple locations or though collaborative arrangements;
* return the report by email to the Vice-President (Education), via [qsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:qsa@soton.ac.uk) no more than four weeks after the final Board of Examiners meeting for the academic year of the report;
* contact [qsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:qsa@soton.ac.uk) if you have any difficulties completing this form.

Your report will be acknowledged by a member of the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT) and forwarded to the School. The programme team will respond to your 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.

External examiner reports cannot be considered confidential. The University is committed to making its external examiner reports available within the University community 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](mailto:Vice-Chancellor@soton.ac.uk).

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

# External examiner details

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| Faculty: | *Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences* |
| School: | *School of Geography and Environmental Science* |
| External examiner’s name: | Professor Skye Blue |
| **External examiner’s home institution:** | University of Autumn |
| 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:** (*for programmes not delivered at the University of Southampton but at a partner institution under collaborative arrangements)****:***  *(if ‘other’ selected please state place)* | *University of Southampton and University of Southampton Malaysia (UoSM)* |
| Year of appointment: *(e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd or final year of appointment)* | *3rd year* |
| Date of report submission: | *30/06/2022* |

# Threshold academic standards of awards and student achievement

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| **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, with a partner institution, 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 and 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?** | *Yes* |
| *Use this space 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: | | |

# Assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to intended learning outcomes

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| **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 in the box below 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**. | |
| *Use this space to provide comment on 3.2 above and any particular issues or areas of good practice:*  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.  It would be good to see the inclusion of more creative/presentation skills in assignments.  The marking criteria is clearly articulated. The quality of feedback varies between modules, but staff generally provide excellent feedback which is helpful to students.  The use of Blackboard supports a coherent approach to the assessment and feedback process.  The assignments reviewed demonstrated that there are high expectations of students to critically engage with ideas as part of their academic and professional learning. | | |
| Programme Team response to the above: | | |

# 4. Assessment process

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| **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 |
| *Use this space 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: | | |

# Application of procedures relating to [special considerations](http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/special-considerations.html) and [academic integrity](http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/sectIV-index.html)

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| **5.1** | **Was there evidence at the Board of Examiners that the School 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 School 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 |
| *Use this space 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: | | |

# Curriculum, learning and teaching methods and resources

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| **6.1** | **Does the curriculum remain current?** | Yes |
| **6.2** | **Is the quality and range of learning and teaching methods and resources available to students appropriate**? | Yes |
| **6.3** | **If the programme(s)/module(s) are delivered under collaborative arrangements, with a partner institution, 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?** | Yes |
| *Use this space 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: | | |

# Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements

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| **7.1** | **Do you have any specific comments to raise regarding PSRB requirements relating to the programme(s)?** | Yes |
| *Use this space 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: | | |

# Recommendations for the Programme Team, School, Faculty or the University and any further feedback for consideration

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| **Use this space to:**   * *list any recommendations for action to enhance the programme(s) and the quality of learning opportunities provided to students;* * *share any observations that might help the programme team further enhance the student experience e.g. currency of programme content, teaching, learning assessment or resources;*   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: |

# Innovation and good practice

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| Use this space to identify 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: |

# Recommendations made in previous report(s)

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| Have comments made in your previous report(s) been 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: |

# First annual report - complete only in your first year of office

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| Use this space to provide a brief overview of your first year in office, in particular the effectiveness of the arrangements for your induction:  I was very happy with the introduction I received to the University. The online induction site was very useful and the programme team met with me via an online call to explain further details of the programme. I was able to meet with students when I visited the campus. Administrative teams answered any queries I had quickly and efficiently. |
| Programme Team response to the above: |

# Final exit report – complete only at the end of your term of office

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| Use this space to comment on:   * *your overall experience as an external examiner with the University;* * *any significant changes in standards over your term of office;* * *any other areas that you feel appropriate to highlight in this final report;* * *whether any concerns raised in your reports have not been addressed to your satisfaction.*   N/A |
| Programme Team response to the above: |

# Information to assist you to complete your duties

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| **Did you have timely access to the following documents relevant to your responsibilities:** | | |
| 1 | [QAA subject benchmarks](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) or Master’s Degree Characteristics | Yes |
| 2 | Programme handbook | Yes |
| 3 | Programme regulations (these may be in the programme handbook) | Yes |
| 4 | Module profiles (these may be in the programme handbook) | Yes |
| 5 | Draft assessments e.g. examination papers or assignment briefs  Was the nature and level of the draft assessments appropriate? | Yes |
| Yes |
| 6 | Draft marking criteria and/or model answers | Yes |
| 7 | Appropriate samples of student work e.g. examination papers, assignments, other forms of coursework, projects, dissertations to enable you to:   * make a sound judgement on the standards achieved; * assess whether the internal marking, and classifications awarded were appropriate and consistent; * assess the general standard and consistency of marking; * assess if the work was marked and moderated internally, in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of the given marks in line with the University’s [Double-Blind Marking and Moderation Policy](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/quality/assessment/framework/policyprocedure.page). | Yes |
| **Other information (if applicable)** | | |
| 8 | Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? | Yes |
| 9 | Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/presentations/appropriate professional placements? | Yes |
| **Board of Examiners** | | |
| 10 | Were you able to attend the Board of Examiners meeting (including virtually or by telephone attendance)? | Yes |
| 11 | If not, what alternative arrangements were put in place | N/A |
| 12 | Were you given sufficient notice of the Board of Examiners meeting? | Yes |
| 13 | If you did attend, was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction in accordance with the University’s policies and procedures | Yes |
| 14 | Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners | Yes |
| *Use this space to expand on any of your responses, particularly if any answer is ‘Partially’ or ‘No’* | | |

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| Programme Team response to the above: |

# Report from an Adviser to the External Examiner (if applicable)

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| **In exceptional cases an Adviser to the External Examiner may have been appointed for a module falling outside of your subject expertise as the programme external examiner. If this is the case, please respond to the following questions.** | | |
| 14.1 | Did you receive a written report from the Adviser to the External Examiner prior to the Board of Examiners? | N/A |
| 14.2 | If required, did you have the opportunity to discuss any feedback with the Adviser to the External Examiner? | N/A |
| 14.3 | Has any feedback from the Adviser to the External Examiner been included in your report above for the programme team to consider and respond to? | N/A |

For completion by the School, noting the following:

* a fully approved response to this report should be available within 8 weeks of receipt;
* the approved response will be sent to the external examiner by QSAT;
* if the response is delayed the external examiner can expect to receive an email from the School explaining the reason for this and when the response is expected;
* reports are read by and discussed within the programme team and other relevant staff in the School;
* a response to the feedback received is added to this form 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 School, each School 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 or equivalent and approved by the Deputy Head of School (Education) on behalf of the School Programmes Committee as shown below.

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| Responses to the report made by:  *(insert electronic signature or typed name):* |  |
| Position: | Programme Lead on behalf of the programme team |
| Date: | Click here to enter a date. |

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| Responses to the report made by:  *(only applicable where a programme offers modules owned by another School and a second signature is required) (insert electronic signature or typed name)* |  |
| Position: | Programme Lead on behalf of the programme team |
| School: |  |
| Date: | Click here to enter a date. |

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| Responses to the report read and supported by:  *(insert electronic signature or typed name)* |  |
| Position: | Director of Programmes or equivalent (where applicable) |
| Date: | Click here to enter a date. |

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| Responses to the report approved on behalf of School Programmes Committee by:  *(insert electronic signature or typed name)* |  |
| Position: | Deputy Head of School (Education) |
| Date: | Click here to enter a date. |