

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

External examiner's report form 2008/09

Dear Colleague

Attached is our annual external examiner's report form. The form comes in three parts: part A asks some basic quality assurance questions; part B is for use by academic departments and/or Boards of Examiners; part C is to be made available to appropriate students, for example through departmental Staff:Student Liaison Committees. Please complete all three sections.

It would be a great help to us if you were able to complete the form in an electronic version. If you are willing to do so, please email the completed form to Katrina Etheridge at examinations@lse.ac.uk

We do however recognise that for some examiners the paper version is easier to use, in which case please complete the attached form and return it to Katrina Etheridge, Student Services Centre, LSE, Houghton St, London WC2A 2AE.

If at all possible we would like to receive your form within two weeks of the final examiners' meeting.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact Simeon Underwood, Academic Registrar (s.underwood@lse.ac.uk).

Thank you for the time and trouble you take over these reports. We see them as an especially important part of our quality assurance processes.

Janet Hartley
Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning)
July 2009



THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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The School sees it as important that there should be a three-way dialogue on standards and assessment between you as the external examiner, the Department concerned and the central School bodies. If the space provided in the box is not large enough for your answers please continue on a separate sheet.

Your name and institution:

Professor Matthew Jones, School of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham

Department you are responsible for examining (eg Economics):

International History

Degree(s) being examined (e.g. MSc/BSc in Economics):

MA History of International Relations

MSc History of International Relations

MSc History and Theory of International Relations

MSc in International Affairs (LSE and Peking)

Course(s) being examined (e.g. EC484, Econometric Analysis):

HY400; HY411; HY422; HY 426; HY 429; HY432; HY434; HY461; HY 463; HY 464;

HY 499 (Dissertations)

Were you able to attend the final examiners' meeting(s)?

YES

DATE(S): 22 October 2009

PART C

This part of the form will be shared with students, usually through departmental Staff:Student Liaison Committees. You are asked to provide a brief summary of your comments from Parts A and B that might be of particular interest to students. We would also ask that you restrict your comments to those that would be of primary interest to students, rather than, for example, technical points on assessment schemes. What you have written will not be changed, though it may be accompanied by a statement of the actions the Department or School has taken in response to your comments.

Please use the space below to provide commentary on any or all of the following topics:

- Strengths/weaknesses of the programme/course
- Methods of teaching (judging by standards achieved by students)
- Methods of assessment
- Standard of the student performance

The Master's programmes in the Department are notable for their high levels of student achievement and the overall quality of the work. Students have obviously benefitted from deep immersion in some of the latest secondary work in their various fields of study. Many exam scripts were notable for their sophistication of argument and ambitious scope considering the time pressures involved. Dissertation topics this year covered an impressive and highly original range of topics, and the research efforts that were made by students, including work in previously untapped archival sources, was in many cases remarkable. I thought this also reflected a great deal of credit on the standards and level of advice and supervision offered by staff in the department. Several dissertations were of publishable quality and came up with genuinely new and original findings.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN COMPLETING THIS FORM.



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Your name and institution:

**Professor Glyn Stone
University of the West of England, Bristol**

Department you are responsible for examining (eg Economics):

International History

Degree(s) being examined (e.g. MSc/BSc in Economics):

MA in History of International Relations

MSc in History of International Relations

MSc in Theory and History of International History

MSc in History of Nationalism

MSc in International Affairs (LSE and Peking)

MSc in History of Empires

Course(s) being examined (e.g. EC484, Econometric Analysis):

HY412: Spain and the Great Powers 1936-1953: Civil War, World War, Cold War

HY423: Empire, Colonialism and Globalisation

HY424: The Napoleonic Empire: The Making of Modern Europe?

HY433: Cultural Encounters from the Renaissance to the Modern World

HY435: Political Islam: from Ibn Taymiyya to Osama Bin Laden

HY451: Persecution in Europe: from Witch-hunts to Ethnic Cleansing

3 Were you satisfied with the standard of internal marking?

I said last year that the internal examiners continue to be meticulous, scrupulous, fair and incisive in their marking of a variety of modes of assessment. I have no reason whatsoever to change my mind this year. The commitment of the internal examiners to double marking all pieces of assessment ensures that all candidates receive fair, equitable and appropriate treatment. The internal examiners, encouraged by the external examiners, are now marking the complete range, particularly at the top where some of the work completed by the candidates is exceptional.

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- Strengths/weaknesses of the programme/course
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On the basis of the work produced by the candidates there are few if any discernible weaknesses in the International History programme/courses. The growth in student numbers has inevitably resulted in a longer tail with a number of failures. But these are accounted for either by students having genuine extenuating circumstances or by a few whose lack of application to their work prevents them from achieving the required standard. It is to the credit of the International Historians that so many of the candidates achieve distinctions, or merits or good passes. The number of distinctions and merits is particularly impressive because the standards set are rigorous and challenging. The generally high quality of the essays, the examination scripts and above all the dissertations confirm the excellent teaching and supervision provided by the academic staff. In many cases it is possible to discern consistent focus, attention to detail, rigorous analysis and breadth of reading in the candidates' work. As in previous years, some of the dissertations were outstanding and a number achieved publishable standards. The degree of research of some of the candidates with regard to their dissertations is awesome.

My four years as external examiner are now up but it would be remiss of me if I did not conclude this report without my unstinting praise for the high standards maintained within the Department of International History, the excellent teaching of the academic staff, the application and achievement of the students and the considerable efficiency and kindness of Demetra Frini and Nayna Bhatti in the Departmental Office.