

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

External examiner's report form 2009/10

Dear Colleague

Attached is our annual external examiner's report form. The form comes in four 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; part D is for you to make any additional comments to the School. Please complete each of sections A to C; section D is to be completed at your discretion.

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 Mark Thomson, Assistant Registrar (m.t.thomson@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; and it is 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.

Janet Hartley
Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning)
July 2010



THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

External examiner's report form 2009/10

If the space provided in the box is not large enough for your answers please continue on a separate sheet.

Your name, institution and email address:

Professor Matthew Jones, University of Nottingham, Matthew.Jones2@Nottingham.ac.uk

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)

MA in International and World History (Columbia-LSE double degree)

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

HY400; HY422; HY 429; HY 432; HY433; HY 436; HY437; HY461; HY 463; HY 499

(Dissertations)

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

DATE(S): 28 October 2010

PART C

Comments in 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

We would particularly appreciate a full statement in this part of the form.

I was again very impressed with the standards of work and performance that I saw on the Master's programmes offered by the Department. There were some very deep and sophisticated arguments displayed in examination scripts. Many of the dissertations I read were of publishable quality, dealt with original and absorbing topics, and were informed by use of new primary sources (some drawn from overseas archives). For many students these were clearly the high-point of the degree and represented a great opportunity to demonstrate what they could really achieve if given the freedom to range widely by topic, and the access to materials to sustain and reinforce their analyses and ideas. I thought that the several different methods of assessment used on courses worked well in showing the all-round abilities of students, and many of them excelled in the various forms of exercise. There seemed to be a wide choice of courses on offer, some allowing for a wider sweep of history, and others giving a tighter focus.

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If the space provided in the box is not large enough for your answers please continue on a separate sheet.

Your name, institution and email address:

Dr T.G. Otte,
School of History,
University of East Anglia,
University Plain,
Norwich NR4 7TJ.

Department you are responsible for examining (eg Economics):
International History.

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

Course(s) being examined (e.g. EC484, Econometric Analysis):
HY 409, HY 411, HY 412, HY 423, HY 424, HY 426, HY 435, HY 451, HY 462.

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

YES

DATE: 28 Oct. 2010.

PART C

Comments in 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.

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We would particularly appreciate a full statement in this part of the form.

In my judgement, the various LSE M.A./M.Sc. programmes in International History are excellent. They offer students a broad range of different aspects of international history, all taught at a very high level of professional expertise. Students can feel rightly privileged to study here.

The methods of assessment were varied and challenging, but designed in such a way as to get the best out of students. Indeed, some of the best work produced is truly excellent. Student performance and evidence supplied in the module handbooks are strongly suggestive of excellent and inspiring standards of teaching and supervision by academic staff.

I more especially liked the broad chronological and thematic range of subjects taught and supervised. It seems to me to be very important that this be maintained.

In my experience, existing academic structures and procedures are robust, fair, and work smoothly.

Externals will always feel obliged to say something critical or negative. Try as I might, I could find nothing that ought to be singled out in this respect. My experience with the M.A./M.Sc. programme in 2009-10 was a wholly satisfactory.