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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Sukumar Natarajan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Bath		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MArch Dissertations		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-19	Date of Report:	14-03-2019

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board.

**Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).**

Please extend spaces where necessary.

**1. Programme Structure** (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

This is my second year as examiner and I continue to be impressed by the quality of the dissertation programme. Students have access to a good pool of supervision talent and expertise. It was clear that students had access to research methods material. And there have been year on year improvements in the access to and provision of these sessions.

**2. Academic Standards** (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

I was provided with a good sample of dissertations that had variety in topics, methods of enquiry and grades achieved. The latter included two pass (just over 40%) and two distinction level (>70%) submissions. I was also able to observe the viva voce examination for several candidates, following the newly introduced format where the external examiner is not one of the examiners. This allows me to comment with confidence on the standards achieved by the students. It is clear that the work presented is commensurate with the level of examination and on par with other highly-ranked programmes at comparable institutions.

**3. The Assessment Process** (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

The assessment process is highly rigorous for this level of study, with each work being marked by the supervisor and an independent internal. The range of marks is wide (38% – 90%) and the marks are, in general, commensurate with the work produced.

- 4. Examination of Master's Dissertations** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

As above, this is in general very good. One possible recommendation might be to consider a differentiated marking framework for research that is more qualitative / subjective / exploratory / personal / experiential in nature from that which is more quantitative / scientific / objective. These represent differing types of enquiry and there were cases at the upper end of the mark spectrum when there may not have been complete consistency in the way the marks were awarded across these boundaries.

#### **5. Year-on-Year Comments**

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here.](#)]

The changes made this year to the structure and format of the assessment procedure and the role of the externals, in response to the comments made by the examiners last year, have been very welcome. I am aware of further changes, such as our involvement in the other aspects of the programme to further contextualise the dissertation, and I welcome this.

- 6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

NA

- 7. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement** (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

Overall, the rigour brought to the marking process through the use of a double marking system followed by a viva is excellent. The improvements in support to the students in terms of research methods and practice, has paid clear dividends and should be continued.

- 8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)** (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

## 9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-7 above for any answer of 'No'.

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
<b>Programme/Course information</b>				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?			
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			
<b>Commenting on draft examination question papers</b>				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
<b>Examination scripts</b>				
9.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
<b>Coursework and practical assessments</b>				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?			
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?			
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?			
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			
<b>Clinical examinations (if applicable)</b>				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
<b>Sampling of work</b>				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			
<b>Examining board meeting</b>				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?			

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			
9.19	Cardiff University recognises the productive contribution of External Examiners to the assessment process and, in particular, to the work of the Examining Board. Have you had adequate opportunities to discuss the Programme and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?			
<b>Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)</b>				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:  
[externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk)

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE