CARDIFF UNIVERSITY External Examiner Annual Report Form

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet here and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE
Wales UK

Tel   please see below
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE
Cymru Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn   gweler isod
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.caerdydd.ac.uk

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Mike Holcombe		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of sheffield		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Computer Science		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-2019	Date of Report:	2/7/19

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the dissertation stage Examining Board in the case of postgraduate Master's programmes).

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)

The programme covers a wide area of modern computer science. The teaching of practical software engineering is innovative and successful.

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

In general the material and standard of teaching is comparable with other institutions. The big problem is grade inflation with very large numbers of 1sts being awarded thus undermining the reputation of the Cardiff degree.

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

This year 46% get firsts, down from 50% last year.

This is still too high.

As a comparison other universities with higher A Level entry requirements award around 20-22%

Some of the module marks are too high – a result of exam papers that are too easy and assignments also.

Examples: 3109, 3110, 6321 all have means above 70% and 3107, 3114, have means above 65%.

Coursework marks are too high in: 3101, 3104, 3110, 3112, 3114,

Scaling of marks should be undertaken where appropriate - according to agreed guidelines.

A review of the standard of questions set in exams is under way. At least part of each paper/assignment should be aimed at identifying the best first class performance.

The proposed "Guidelines for setter and moderators of assessment" is a very good start and should help to standardize and increase the challenge of the exam papers and coursework assignments.

Module statistics are presented well.

The tracking forms do not return to the external when critical comments are made. Just knowing that something has been done to deal with the comments would be useful.

The individual project website is very useful.

It is not very clear how marks are derived. The comments are helpful. Maybe there should be a more detailed breakdown of marks – perhaps into blocks of 20% or so and the mark given justified more clearly.

The group project with real clients is very good. It should be extended to the CS programme.

SIMS - the mark system - does not seem to generate correct final results. This needs investigating. This is the main reason that the Department insists that exam boards do not use anonymous mark sheets, against Registry advice.

Updated May 2019

4. **Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)
   [*Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.*]

5. **Year-on-Year Comments**
   [Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website here.]

The Software Engineering degree has successfully produced its first graduates and seems to be an important new style of course.

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)

This was fine

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

As mentioned before, the SE degree, particularly the projects involving external clients, is excellent. I think this should be extended to Computer Science students.

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

N/A?

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)
Programme/Course information				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	Y		
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?		N	
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?		?	
Examination scripts				
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?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?		N	
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
Coursework and practical assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining board meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with	Y		

Updated May 2019

	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?	**Y**		
Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)				
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

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