



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report and are available at <http://learning.cf.ac.uk/quality/review/external-examiners/reports/>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr. Colin Johnson		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Kent		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report	Computer Science <i>all COMSC UG programmes</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015/16	Date of Report:	20 th August 2016

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff.**

1. Programme Structure

The programme is well structured. There is plenty of interesting and up-to-date material in the syllabus. The programme ends with a capstone project, and it was good to see a wide variety of (sometimes very challenging) topics being carried out in these projects.

2. Academic Standards

The standards are high, and in line with my knowledge of standards at my own institution and other institutions across the sector. In particular the final project work demonstrates a commendably high level of achievement and breath of understanding from the student body.

It is a pity that the extremely high achievements obtained by a small number of students could not be acknowledged in some more formal way – there seemed to be a small group of students whose performance was a clear step higher than the overall first-class cohort, and perhaps the University should consider introducing some kind of “starred first” for such students.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process is generally good. There is a good balance of practical coursework assessments and examinations, as fits a subject such as this which has a substantial practical element. The examinations and assessments were given to me in good time for review. Despite the review process, a number of

errors made it through to the exam papers; the School should examine why this is the case. Marking was carried out to a high standard.

The exam board was well run and it was clear how decisions were arrived at.

I agree with the scaling decisions made at the board. A couple of modules required heavy scaling to be applied; it is inevitable that this will happen from time to time, but the School should be careful to ensure that the modules where the scaling happened are looked at carefully in the 2016/17 academic year. Perhaps new modules would benefit from preparatory actions for the students such as mock exam papers being provided. It was good to see the placement reports this year, this is a good feature of the programme and appears to be assessed well.

It is a pity in some cases that a longer (in time) exam paper could not be set – I got the impression on a couple of modules that students had been *disadvantaged* by having to make a quick choice of questions, and that longer papers would allow more careful work and therefore provide both a better student experience and better assessment.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Good to see the placement reports this year!

I notice that the online publication of external examiner reports (at <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice/>) has now been removed from the University website (this part of the site appears to have been transferred to the students' union, who have not continued to provide these). I thought that this was a very useful facility both for myself as an external examiner and more widely as a resource for a wide range of stakeholders, and it seems a retrograde step in terms of transparency. I would urge the University to consider reintroducing these to the site.

5. Preparation / Induction Activity (for new External Examiners only)

n/a

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Nothing to note this year.

7. Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations (External Examiners for postgraduate Master's Programmes only, see also 9.23-9.29 below)

n/a

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

n/a

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-8 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		
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?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
Marking 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?	Y		
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				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
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?	Y		
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
9.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
9.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
9.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
9.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
9.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
9.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
9.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

ExternalExaminers@cf.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

SAMPLING OF TAUGHT MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

External Examiners shall be expected to see prescribed numbers and ranges of Dissertations, but not to mark them, on the following basis:

At least 10% of Dissertations for a postgraduate taught Master's Programme, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure) must be seen by the External Examiner(s). Where the total number is less than 10, all Dissertations must be seen by the External Examiner(s) #.

Dissertations seen by External Examiners should include examples from across the whole range of achievement (i.e. Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail).

External Examiners will retain the right to see other Dissertations at random.

Where more than one External Examiner is appointed on a Programme, at least 10% of Dissertations, or a minimum of 10 (whichever is the higher figure), should be seen collectively by the External Examiners.