



## 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](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	R L Reuben		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Heriot-Watt University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	Mechanical Engineering		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016/17	Date of Report:	5/9/17

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught 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 Data Protection Act (1998).**

Please extend spaces where necessary.

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

The programme structure is entirely appropriate for mechanical engineering undergraduate degrees at the bachelor and master levels. It includes all the necessary topics and activities to meet the requirements of IMechE and is delivered in a coherent and well-thought-out way. The course contains a combination of classical and emerging content as befits a research-led University and offers a range of study modalities with an evolving emphasis on project work as students get to more senior levels.

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

The assessment instruments are of an appropriate standard and cover all of the topics in the structure. Thresholds are applied in such a way as to assure validity of the awards.

The standards are comparable with those of similar courses at similar UK universities and the student performance is also broadly comparable.

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

Assessment instruments include a range of measures, such as project reports, oral examinations, presentations, coursework and written examinations. Generally, examiners might consider grading each examination question to ensure that threshold, competent and excellent answers can be distinguished in each one.

The evaluation of student performance is carried out according to the regulations and the processes are consistent and auditable. The decision-making is complex (in the interests of the students), but this makes the process a little opaque to examiners.

The Board conducted its business, strongly guided by the student records system and by colleagues from Registry. Historical data on student performance per module was discussed and appropriate consideration was given to the need for moderation of marks.

**4. Year-on-Year Comments**

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).] Examiners are gradually getting used to relying more on the student records system to inform decisions, and ensuring that they mark papers accordingly.

Two major changes will be of interest to following examiners; the reduction of examination burden in junior years and the growing pressure for re-sit in the award year.

**5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

n/a

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

Examiners were highly engaged at the Board, clearly knew the students and took care over their assessment.

Attendance at the Board was excellent, and included research leaders and senior members of the School and University.

The skilful and good-humoured way in which the chair steered the Board towards consensus.

Students particularly appreciated the breadth of the provision and commented on the friendly and supportive atmosphere in the Department. Students had a variety of views on the changes to assessment.

The provision of information, and its state of organisation during the visit was again exemplary.

The breadth and interesting nature of project topics and the way in project are assessed.

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

Over my period of tenure there have been no major changes and the only recommendations I have made are about provision of information, all of which has been acted upon.

It might be worth considering being more explicit on closing the loop between External Examiner's comments and modifications to examination papers.

In common with many others in the sector, the University is embarking on a reform of the programme and, importantly, the assessment regime from first year upwards. It would be very interesting to be able to observe how this develops.

Although it is not part of the curriculum per se, the University's Formula Student team enjoys an excellent rapport with academic staff and also enjoys a great deal of success!

## 8. 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>				
8.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	y		
8.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?	y		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	y		
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	y		
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
8.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	y		

8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	y		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	y		
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
8.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	y		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			na
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	y		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	y		
8.19	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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			na
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			na
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			na
<b>Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)</b>				
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			na
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			na
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			na
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			na

8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			<b>na</b>
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			<b>na</b>
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			<b>na</b>
8.30	<b>Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations.</b> <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i>			

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