

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

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	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:	2017/18	Date of Report:	July 3rd 2018

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)

The design and implementation of the courses are broadly in line with the norm for Computer Science and the types of teaching and learning are also appropriate. The Software engineering programme is very innovative and is highly commended.

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

The standards superficially seem to be in line with other similar institutions but the number of firsts awarded – 50% is of serious concern. Around 80% of students gained a 1st or 2-1. This is grade inflation of a type I have not seen before. This is a major public concern.

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 seems fairly standard but it is delivering extreme results. This may be because the exam papers have become too easy, rather formulaic and lacking in challenge for most students.

Some papers could include less bookwork and more problems. Also there is a lack of evaluative and experiential questions, questions that explore how the student would use their knowledge to approach a real life problem. I call these “value-added questions”. There is too much “here is a small well defined problem – solve it”.

I looked carefully at the response of the students to different types of question and the very best students were able to answer these value-added types of questions better than the rest. These seem to differentiate what I would regard as 1st class students from the rest.

Maybe the 1st. class borderline should be raised to 80% by scaling. This would produce more realistic results.

Scaling was applied to 4 modules – mostly to raise marks.

There is a variety of exam rubrics, one paper required students to answer ALL questions on the paper and this delivered more realistic marks.

The exam board was not based on anonymous class lists. This is very unusual practice now. I recommend the use of anonymous lists in future.

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

N/A

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

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

The results were higher this year and have become problematic.

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)

7. **Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement** (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)
The software Engineering degree is an excellent innovation.

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)
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?	Y?		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?			
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		

	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