



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.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr. Mike Just		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Heriot-Watt University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	All Taught MSc programmes in COMSC		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-2017	Date of Report:	30 Oct 2017

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 MSc programmes appear to be well-structured, and the courses offered for each programme fit well with the programmes and their learning objectives. There is a good mix of specialist, conversion, and joint degrees offered by the School.

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

The academic standards in the School are high, and match with my expectations based on my experience at my own institution, as well as other similarly ranked institutions. Several modules do seem to have a clear distinction between CW and exam results, with respective averages of approximately 75% and 40%. Though this is similar to results that I've seen for other MSc programmes as well, and seems to generally reflect that many MSc students are stronger in practical areas, and less so in their ability to respond to more theoretical questions.

Note that for this year (my first year), I was not able to review any MSc dissertations as I start my external examiner position too late in the year.

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

I was impressed by the effectiveness of the processes for assessment, moderation and checking for the exams. Rules for condonement seem pretty clear, including review of borderline cases for students, or for an entire module, and seem to be fairly and consistently implemented in the School.

The exam board was very well run and it was clear how decisions were made.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

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

I was able to access only the previous reports for the UG programmes from the link provided in the guidance document. In any case, it appears that no major ongoing issues remain at present.

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)

I feel as though as I was well supported by the academic and support staff in preparing for my first year at Cardiff as an external examiner. It's a pity that we were not able to arrange a time for me to attend at the same time as the other MSc external examiner, though we were able to interact and share notes via email.

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

As I walked around the School, I noticed some very useful posters throughout that listed milestones for each module (e.g., dates when CW is due). We do something similar at my own institution, though I was more impressed by the posters presented at Cardiff. I expect that the students find these very helpful reminders, and they also allow the School to better understand and appreciate the overall CW workload for their students and its spread throughout each semester.

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

n/a

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)
Programme/Course Information				
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		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
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		
Marking Examination Scripts				
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		
Coursework and Practical Assessments				
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		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				
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	Y		

	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?			
Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?		N	
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
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?			N/A
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A
8.30	<p>Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i></p> <p>As noted above, I started my external examiner position too late in this first year to have an opportunity to review the MSc dissertations for 2016-2017. I will participate in my first MSc dissertation examination board in December 2017.</p>			

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