



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	H. G. Dales		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Lancaster		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Mathematics and Statistics (Examiner in Pure Mathematics)		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	27-6-2013

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online.**

- 1. Programme Structure** The programme seems to be satisfactory, given the constraints imposed by the length of the academic year and the rules of the University.

The programme is strong in analysis. However I would like to see a module in the second year on 'Metric and topological spaces'; this seems to be a logically necessary prerequisite to more advanced modules in analysis in the 3rd and 4th years.

The programme is not so strong in algebra. For example, the module in 'Groups, rings, and fields' in year 3 begins with some elementary material on groups; I feel that this material should be transferred to the first year, to give a language that can be used in other modules, such as the module on 'Knots'.

I would like to see a little more on the logical foundations of mathematics; there should be a some naïve set theory in the first year to give a background language, and at least a mention of the uncountability of the reals and the meaning of the statement that the Continuum Hypothesis is independent from the axioms of ZFC.

2. Academic Standards The academic standards of the modules on Pure Mathematics, and the criteria for awarding various classes of degrees are in line with those elsewhere in the UK.

3. The Assessment Process The assessment process seems to be very careful and well-organised; however it is time-consuming for colleagues at Cardiff and external examiners.

One or two modules at level 3 are rather straightforward, and some students receive high raw marks that are then somewhat scaled down. Some parts of some questions at this level should be more challenging to the stronger students to obviate this.

The decision of the University to automatically award a 1st class degree to all those whose average final score is above 68%, without further discussion, has a danger in mathematics of being somewhat too generous at this borderline; colleagues at Cardiff should be aware of this when giving grades on individual modules.

I am not certain that the University has a totally satisfactory process of dealing with “extenuating circumstances”. It is not appropriate that individual cases be discussed at a large meeting; perhaps a small group should meet separately after the provisional grades are known, with access to medical reports, to determine what effect, if any, the circumstances should have on the final degree classification.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

The first cohort of students who entered the MMath programme are now in their third year. The performance of these students (around 14) was excellent; the initial standards of this new programme seem to be very comparable with those of longer-established programmes elsewhere.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

I am grateful for courtesy and careful consideration by all involved in the examination process over three years; in particular I would like to thank the Head of Department and the Administrative Officer.

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?			N/A
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?			N/A
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?			N/A
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?			N/A
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			N/A
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			N/A
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 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)				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?	Y		
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?	Y		

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:

Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE