

EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Steve Gallivan		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	UCL		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc in Mathematics and its applications and related BSc Mathematics degrees		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2012-2013	Date of Report:	3/7/13

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

My comments relate to areas where I have specific responsibility: Statistics and Operational Research.

I was impressed. The coverage of Statistics and Operational Research is very good, written documentation for students excellent and taught material generally matches well with stated aims and learning outcome. I was particularly impressed by the standard of student projects and by the work placement programme.

One course, MA3500 Discrete Optimisation, is largely a Pure mathematics course and clashes somewhat with the practical nature of other courses in Statistics and Operational Research.

2. Academic Standards

I have taught Operational Research at both undergraduate and masters level. I find the standards of the programme very acceptable and the performance of the students commendable. Student results indicate a particularly strong year. I was very impressed by the standards of student projects.

3. The Assessment Process

Assessment methods seem entirely appropriate and comparable with others of which I have experience. The process of assessing written examination scripts is broadly similar to that used at UCL.

Student coursework was not made available, presumably because it had been returned to students once marked to provide feedback. This is common practice in mathematics and I do not view this as a cause for concern. However in view of this, I cannot answer questions 8.13 or 8.14 below with a 'yes/no' answer.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

The assessment process this year is comparable with last year's, which was my first year as external examiner.

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

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

I am very impressed with Statistics and Operational Research teaching at Cardiff. Students' projects and work placement activities are very commendable.

I am concerned by the quality of proof reading of exams, which is rather variable. I understand that the draft of each exam is supposed to be checked by a second examiner within the department before being sent to the external examiner. However, I have found myself compiling quite lengthy notes on many exams. True, many of these concern comparatively slight nit-picks, which I leave to the examiner to change as she/he sees fit. However, in some cases, there were more serious problems. In one case, the very first sentence of the first question was littered with errors and made little sense. It is hard to believe that this had been proof read.

There were also some examples of questions whose meaning was unclear or ambiguous or where insufficient information was given to students concerning what they were expected to assume. It is unreasonable for students to have to guess what question is being asked.

I suggest rather more careful proof reading activity. Also, if errors are found, and an exam re-drafted, then the new version again needs checking internally before being sent to the external examiner.

The external examiner should always receive a complete draft of each exam, including the instructions that will appear on the cover of the exam. One exam arrived without this which meant that I couldn't check it the cover, which is always important.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?	Y		
8.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	N		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?			
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?			
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				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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