

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM 2017

External examiner name:	Corina Cirstea	
External examiner home institution:	University of Southampton	
Course examined:	MSc in Mathematics and Foundations of Computer Science	
Level: (please delete as appropriate)		Postgraduate

Please complete both Parts A and B.

Part A					
		<i>Please () as applicable*</i>	Yes	No	N/A / Other
A1.	Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience?		✓		
A2.	Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the frameworks for higher education qualifications and any applicable subject benchmark statement? <i>[Please refer to paragraph 6 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].</i>		✓		
A3.	Does the assessment process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?		✓		
A4.	Is the assessment process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?		✓		
A5.	Did you receive sufficient information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?		✓		
A6.	Did you receive a written response to your previous report?				✓
A7.	Are you satisfied that comments in your previous report have been properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon?				✓
<p>* If you answer "No" to any question, please provide further comments in Part B. Further comments may also be given in Part B, if desired, if you answer "Yes" or "N/A / Other".</p>					

Part B

B1. Academic standards

- a. *How do academic standards achieved by the students compare with those achieved by students at other higher education institutions of which you have experience?*

The standards achieved by the students on this course are very high, and compare favourably to those of students on similar courses at other institutions.

- b. *Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).*

Student performance and achievement was excellent, with a large proportion of the students being awarded distinction. By the end of the course, the students are well prepared for research study at doctoral level, and several students have already made research contributions that are of publishable quality.

B2. Rigour and conduct of the assessment process

Please comment on the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, including whether it ensures equity of treatment for students, and whether it has been conducted fairly and within the University's regulations and guidance.

The assessment process was rigorous and treated students fairly. Particular attention was given to students with special circumstances and to those whose performance was at the border between degree classifications.

B3. Issues

Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University?

No issues.

B4. Good practice and enhancement opportunities

*Please comment/provide recommendations on any **good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment**, and any **opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities** provided to students that should be noted and disseminated more widely as appropriate.*

This is a very successful course, which attracts strong students. The rather unusual assessment through mini-projects suits this type of students very well and encourages them to realise their full potential.

Attendance of second assessors (instead of the dissertation supervisors) at the oral examination, which I understand was a first this year, worked very well.

In modules with a very high average, you might like to consider introducing a more challenging part of the mini-project, to help better differentiate the exceptional students.

B5. Any other comments

Please provide any other comments you may have about any aspect of the examination process. Please also use this space to address any issues specifically required by any applicable professional body. If your term of office is now concluded, please provide an overview here.

None.

Signed:	<i>C. Gupta</i>
Date:	19 October 2017

Please email your completed form to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk and copy it to the applicable divisional contact set out in the guidelines.

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM 2017

External examiner name:	Dr John Talbot	
External examiner home institution:	UCL	
Course examined:	MSc in Mathematics and the Foundations of Computer Science	
Level: (please delete as appropriate)		Postgraduate

Please complete both Parts A and B.

Part A					
		<i>Please (✓) as applicable*</i>	Yes	No	N/A / Other
A1.	Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience?		X		
A2.	Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the frameworks for higher education qualifications and any applicable subject benchmark statement? <i>[Please refer to paragraph 6 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].</i>		X		
A3.	Does the assessment process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?		X		
A4.	Is the assessment process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?		X		
A5.	Did you receive sufficient information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?		X		
A6.	Did you receive a written response to your previous report?		X		
A7.	Are you satisfied that comments in your previous report have been properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon?		X		
<p>* If you answer "No" to any question, please provide further comments in Part B. Further comments may also be given in Part B, if desired, if you answer "Yes" or "N/A / Other".</p>					

Part B

B1. Academic standards

- a. *How do academic standards achieved by the students compare with those achieved by students at other higher education institutions of which you have experience?*

The academic standards are comparable or higher than any comparable course in the UK. In particular the extended dissertation is often completed to a standard that is higher than one would expect to find at any UK institution.

- b. *Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).*

The mathematics component of this MSc is clearly one of the main attractions for the students and their performance is generally excellent in this component.

B2. Rigour and conduct of the assessment process

Please comment on the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, including whether it ensures equity of treatment for students, and whether it has been conducted fairly and within the University's regulations and guidance.

All components are clearly carefully marked and second marked with due consideration given to any divergence of opinion between the assessors.

B3. Issues

Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University?

No.

B4. Good practice and enhancement opportunities

*Please comment/provide recommendations on any **good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment**, and any **opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities** provided to students that should be noted and disseminated more widely as appropriate.*

The use of take home mini-projects rather than final exams is extremely successful. At this level it offers the students the opportunity to show genuine flair and research potential.

B5. Any other comments

Please provide any other comments you may have about any aspect of the examination process. Please also use this space to address any issues specifically required by any applicable professional body. If your term of office is now concluded, please provide an overview here.

One small anomaly of the course structure is that through the use of "Section A" and "Section B" to denote Maths versus CS topics, all students are obliged to take at least one CS option but there is no obligation for all students to take at least one Maths option. It would seem reasonable to expect all students to take at least one option in each area.

Signed:	
Date:	25/9/2017

Please email your completed form to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk, and copy it to the applicable divisional contact set out in the guidelines.