



a. Actions from 2014/15

Externa	Action	UPDATE Oct 2016
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2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range....

Several students did very poorly in their projects. One student that did pass noted in her viva that the data only became available to her after about 4 weeks into the project period. The external examiners noted last year "It is necessary to ensure that datasets that are needed for the projects are available on time for the students to avoid high time pressure in data analysis beyond their personal

The following data on research project pass/fails suggest that research projects are now getting better marks:

	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Passed	7	6	7	11
Failed	0	4	2	1
Total	7	10	9	12

Two students did not submit a project

It has been suggested to record the details of publications arising from student projects so from this year (2016-17) the course administrator will contact supervisors and ask them to

		<p>- Students are informed (and reminded throughout the year) of existing Student Support and Special Exam Arrangements at both institutions</p>
<p>4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction...</p> <p>IN the most part these have been addressed, but further care and monitoring is needed in a couple of areas. See comments above</p>	<p>Previous comments related to selection of suitable summer projects and length of exam papers. We fully acknowledge some remaining issues with these aspects of the programme and will continue to put actions in place to ensure these can be resolved for next year.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Required actions to be confirmed at next CMC meeting</p>	<p>Please see comments above (particularly the comments in the first box, with the</p>

<p>reports be graded in light of what is realistically possible to achieve within the time allowed. Students and supervisors should also ensure that projects are not overly ambitious. We would welcome a review of the projects undertaken in recent years, together with their marks, to better assess whether this impression is valid. If marking does vary by project type I would suggest some form of moderation is needed for those project types that tend to score more poorly.</p>		
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- b. Responses to the comments made by External Examiners in the collaborative Report for 2015/16 written by:
Dr Rob Christley & Professor Ann Lindberg

Student performance

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The range of assessment tasks should enable the students to demonstrate their knowledge and to apply skills. As noted previously, there was evidence that some students struggled at times with the application of

3.4 Standard of marking

The marking appears to be fair and objective. A number of questions were marked using a limited range of possible marks (e.g. a question out of 10 may have only been marked using 0, 5 or 10, rather than other marks being awarded). Given the low number of students it is hard to determine if this was just an aberration, but care should be taken to try to use the full range of marks available.

The external examiners last year raised an issue with project topics, with some appearing to provide a safer route to high marks, whereas others appeared more risky. This did not appear to be a problem this year. However, the recommendation that the weight of the oral assessment (viva) change from 10/100 to 20/100 has not been acted upon.

Response from college requested: YES

Professor A.L

Agree that marking in general showed a high degree of consistency despite being blinded which indicates that criteria for marking are well-defined.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Julian Drewe

Course Director Response:

We are pleased to report that the external examiners' recommendation to change the weighting of the research project oral assessment (viva) from 10% to 20% has now been implemented. Hence from 2017 exams onwards, the orals will last 30 mins and be worth 20% of the marks for the research module. We apologise that this change took longer to occur than it should have: this was due to a change in course director and a concurrent major restructuring of course committees.

This change means that students will have longer to orally discuss their projects and do them justice, and hence make it fairer for students who did 'less safe' projects to excel.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.5 In your view, are the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External Examiners)

Yes. The procedures are sound and fairly conducted.

Response from college requested: NO

Professor A.L

Yes

3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined

Not applicable

Response from college requested: NO

4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Last year we recommended the board consider increasing the weighting of the viva to 20/100. The board may have good reason to not do this, but feedback would be welcome.

Response from college requested: YES

Professor A.L

First year as External Examiner

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Julian Drewe

Course Director Response:

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4.4 I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

All student papers were available to me. However, we noted that very few papers were annotated by the

1. Emphasise to examiners that markers must annotate papers so that it is clear where marks were awarded.
2. Request LHSTM/RVC supplies the exam results next year in a format requested by the externals (i.e. only for

4.8 The standards

Completion

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

