**Internal Examiner’s Report on Thesis by Sive Finlay**

This is an extremely well-written thesis on an excellent piece of work, investigating the morphological diversity of tenrecs in comparison to golden moles. The work shows great experimental rigour, with enormous care being taken to get accurate, meaningful measures of the skulls and to analyse them using the latest and most effective tools. The work required considerable effort and patience, involving long trips to several museums worldwide to photograph the samples under controlled and standardised mountings and background, with repeated photographs of the same sample to check for methodological consistency. The analysis required a good working knowledge of geometric morphometric analytical techniques, which are by no means easy to master. The results are introduced with a clear knowledge of the literature pertaining to divergent and convergent evolution, and the importance of understanding the origins of diversity. The work is discussed in relation to the expectation of much higher diversity in the tenrecs than in the best comparison group, the golden moles, and the finding of much less difference than expected. The data set provided in the thesis and the data made publically available, represent an important resource for further study of both convergent and divergent evolution. Thus the candidate shows all the criteria for an MSc to be awarded and I recommend that the award be made after minor corrections.

These really centre round two areas. The weakest part of the thesis was the discussion, and I felt that the interesting differences between the expected level of diversity in the tenrecs and the results found were not adequately explored. The conclusion was that tenrecs do not show more diversity than the moles but most of the results showed that they did, just not to the extent expected. I think this should be teased out and discussed a little more thoroughly, and have marked on the script where this could be done. In addition I felt that the explanation of some of the more technical parts of the method was a little lacking in detail, especially around semi-landmarks and Procrustes distances, which are not terms generally known to the non-specialist.

I have marked on a PDF version of the thesis all the minor changes which I would like to see, and have no reservation that they will be quickly dealt with.

Nicola Marples FTCD