

Academic & Student Support Services
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Sent by email to Dr Rachel Sara

28 January 19

Dear Dr Sara,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2017/18

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MArch (Design).

Your report has been considered by the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

Issues highlighted in your report:

1. **Year on Year Comments:** The move to Friary house as a temporary solution to studio space has worked well enough for students. However the impact might be felt more widely across the school as the M.Arch

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students are not as present in the Bute building and as a result there is some disconnect between the undergraduate and the masters students.

2. **Areas for Enhancement:** Student wellbeing

Response provided by the School:

1. This is acknowledged and so we have moved MArch 2 back to the Bute building this year (2018/19) to studios created in former School of Journalism, Media and Culture spaces on the lower ground floor.
2. We have previously held specific wellbeing task and finish groups with the students to address student wellbeing. We are currently unable to resource specific counselling within the School and refer to Cardiff University's professional student counselling and wellbeing team. We are reviewing our personal tutoring arrangements as to whether this should be with someone not connected directly to the students teaching and learning. In 2018/19 we have introduced specific personal tutoring meetings with the year chair and deputy year chair.

It is acknowledged that greater opportunity could be made of interaction between all UG year groups. This has been helped by moving back to Bute building and this year MArch 2 students are supporting year 1 design and year 2 technology. There is also a better connection with the student body through Student Association of the Welsh School of Architecture (SAWSA). Opportunities to provide cross-unit interaction are met with mixed opinions from year to year. Some appreciate it, others do not. We are looking to provide opportunities for this type of interaction though and will take on board the suggestions. A research symposium day has been discussed and may be implemented in 2019/20.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. The balance of the final year – with the combination of the design thesis, the practice management and economics work, and the dissertation seems good.
3. The variety of the studio units is excellent. It was wonderful to see such a strong body of work presented.
4. The opportunity for a 'free' unit or equivalent in Unit X is an exciting development.
5. It is also great to see craft and materiality driving a couple of units.
6. The studios examination procedure is very well resourced and rigorous, with a clear briefing process for examiners. The process supports a good sense of occasion for graduating students.
7. There was clear briefing for the external examiner role and access to all the supporting information needed was given. Able to scrutinise all of the

design work and met with students both during their exam presentations, but also informally in a student-external examiner meeting. The process was set up very well – many thanks to the team.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your continued support of the programme.

In order to meet the expectations of the [QAA Quality Code](#), both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on the University's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar