



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Ian C Ward		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Ward Consultancy (ex. Sheffield University)		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	M.Sc in Theory and Practice of Sustainable Design		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013/2014	Date of Report:	26 th June 2014

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

This programme is aimed at providing information on sustainable built environment design, an area of increasing interest nationally and internationally. The academic programme is well structured with a variety of different modules and structures within the modules. The students are made aware of the requirements and work expected from them in each module. The examiners are also made aware of the programme structure and requirements. There is evidence that knowledge gained in one module can be transferred and built upon in subsequent modules. This programme does not have any statutory or regulatory body requirements.

2. Academic Standards

The academic standards are high and require the students to explore issues in depth. Having knowledge of other similar programmes in UK Universities I am confident that this programme compares favourably with them and better than some. I was particularly impressed with one of the projects – Reflective Journal. In this work the students were asked to reflect on issues relating to how they preserve environmental and sustainable issues. I felt that this afforded the students the opportunity to think about the course, their role within it and where they see themselves progressing in the future. Class tests and other assignments were double marked and in most cases the two marks (from the separate markers) were given. There were a few cases where the overall marks were presented but individual tutors' marks were not clear. The students on this course also took core modules which were common to the other Masters programmes offered

(Environmental Design of Buildings and Building Energy and Environmental Performance Modelling). The background of the students on this course were different from those on the other programmes but their achievement in the core modules was of a similar standard to the others – this was encouraging as it demonstrated that despite individuals academic background they were capable of assimilating knowledge in different areas. Comments received by the students were complimentary of the course and the tutors. In particular they felt that the tutors were approachable and listened to their concerns and where appropriate acted upon them. One issue raised by the students was that although they felt the course academically challenging and interesting, they lacked the skills to design a sustainable building. They did express the wish to be able to have some instruction on design tools such as CAD and building simulation. I mentioned this to the tutors, who although they recognised this, felt that it was an issue with this years students and not necessarily consistent with other years. However I do think there is a valid point which I would like to explore in more detail with the tutors.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process was robust and all information required my me was made available on my visit. Much of the background material was sent to me beforehand. I was given sufficient time to look at the work of the students and a folder was prepared in which information on each module including aims objectives, marking policy and marking criteria were clearly outlined. All submitted work by the students was available. I was informed that Cardiff University has moved to a central system of recording marks and producing mark sheets including recommendations. It was unfortunate that the final marks were not available when I arrived so I had to work on provisional marks. At the examiners board meeting the final marks were available but I felt the timescale was a little short. I have a few queries regarding this central system as it appeared last week. Firstly it appears that the Department has no say in whether a student who has missed a particular grade (i.e. distinction) by a single mark cannot make a case to increase/or decrease the marks to alter the category. The masters programme operated by the Department covers three masters degrees which can be taken as full-time, part-time or distance learning. This variety in courses means that the assessment of each student can be complex and it appeared that the central system was unable to deal efficiently with the variety of courses. This issue I expect will be raised by the Department and these glitches will be sorted out for next year.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

This is my first year examining and therefore I cannot relate to previous years comments.

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

Unfortunately I was not available to attend the induction programme set by the University. However I was subsequently sent a copy of all the presentation material from this session. I have also been sent all necessary documentation by the University and Department, including all relevant material for the course which I am examining. On my visit to the Department much of this material was again made available – this provided a back-up just in case the examiners had left theirs behind. Although this is my first time examining at Cardiff University on a Masters

programme it is not my first time examining at this level in other Universities. From my previous experience and the information provided by Cardiff I was completely satisfied with my preparation.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Having three Masters Programmes in the general area of sustainable design is to be commended and all students take a series of core modules. Each course then has their specialist modules. This ensures that a solid basic grounding in sustainable design is provided before specialisms take over. As mentioned before I was impressed with the Reflective Project which is the first time I have seen such a project in this type of course. Looking at the outcomes of this project it was clear that the students not only enjoyed it but they gained valuable insights into themselves and their field of study.

As there are three masters programmes being operated by the Department I would like to see some form of integration between them at a project level. Each course has some form of building analysis or design element which the students have to assess. I was wondering if it would be possible for an assessment to be produced (common in all three courses) in which the students are asked to design say a low impact building and where appropriate analyse its performance. The students from each course could then directly compare their designs and through group discussions learn how the other students have approached the problem and reached conclusions. Such an exercise could help the students to appreciate the issues and problems faced with other professionals in this field.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

Not required.

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	
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		N	
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?	Y		
8.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
8.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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?			N/A
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

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