



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof David Porter		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	M.Arch		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-2014	Date of Report:	

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:** *The programme and its constituent parts form a coherent whole and reflect current practice. It also incorporates all the requirements placed on the programme by the Architects Registration Board and the Royal Institute of British Architects.*

### 2. Academic Standards

*I am satisfied that the programme is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its award in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable benchmark statements and that the academic standards.*

*The achievements of students are generally comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions. There is, however, a significant difference between this course and comparable ones offered in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, which is that the award is examined and granted after 4 years of full-time study rather than 5 elsewhere. This gives the Cardiff students less experience in exploring their designs and less skill in realising them. The grading is in line with the school's Criteria, but the final designs were less polished than they would be if undertaken elsewhere in the UK, which raises a question of comparability with all other UK schools that reach this stage after 5 rather than 4 years.*

*That is, in terms of the school's criteria the work was accurately marked but, because the course is shorter than all comparable courses in the UK, the impression is of over-marking compared with the other schools where this stage is reached after 5 years. This is a shame – these are bright and able students who could be*

*competing at the highest level with their contemporaries elsewhere in the UK if they had the full five years to stretch their wings.*

*The 'year-out' has a value, but is not the equivalent of a full-time year of study. In my meeting with the students they raised concerns over the variability of their experience during this year.*

### **3. The Assessment Process**

*I am satisfied that the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the programme.*

*The programme director who organizes the examination process had been taken ill and so the organization was taken on at short notice by one of his colleagues, who made a magnificent job of it, but was inevitably learning on the job.*

*I understand that the process of external examination is going through a period of change. The system that operated this year ensured that the process of assessment could be adequately overseen by the examiners, but I think the incoming programme leader may want to make some refinements.*

*The external examiners sat-in as a pair of observers of the final viva voce examination of a sample of students. The examination was thorough, and each examination panel included an external, each of which had the experience and standing to be an external examiner, but was part of the course team as far as marking goes. There seemed to be some 'doubling-up' here.*

*I had the opportunity to meet a group of students, but it would be useful to have a little more time with them.*

*We could meet with the staff and discuss plans for the future, which was useful. The work of the undergraduate students was available and it would be helpful to get a clearer idea of the work being examined to the undergraduate programme.*

### **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

*I worked as part of a two-person team with an out-going examiner and so was able to catch-up on the development of the programme and we exchanged views during and after the examination process.*

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

*I attended the general induction for new external examiners, but in the absence of an understanding of exactly what I would be undertaking in the school of architecture, it was difficult to find my way into the bigger picture.*

### **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement:**

*The department of architecture carries a very high reputation within the architectural profession and I could see why – the reputation is justified. The quality was high, the students bright and engaged, and very well taught by excellent staff.*

*The studio has five tutorial groups led by a team of very high-level staff who bring a wide range of experience to bear. I understand that next year the tutorial groups will be constituted as teaching units where each unit leader will be able to bring their research interests to bear in the studio projects. With this, each unit will have its own*

*Learning Outcomes, which will help differentiate the approach and scope of each unit and allow a clearer student choice.*

*This might be a good opportunity to define more clearly what constitutes a 'design thesis' as against a 'design project'. In preparation for the examination I was sent a design 'apologia' from each of the students to help set the scene for their presentation. This was useful, but along with a clearer definition of what constitutes a thesis might be a clearer definition of the purpose of the 'apologia' so that it becomes less of a general statement and gives a clearer indication of the student's approach and objectives. And perhaps there is a more suitable title than 'apologia'?*

## **7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

## 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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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	
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			N/A
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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?			N/A
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			N/A
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			N/A
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			N/A
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			N/A
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		<b>Yes (Y)</b>	<b>No (N)</b>	<b>N/A (N/A)</b>
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		
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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			<b>N/A</b>
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			<b>N/A</b>

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto: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