



Academic & Student Support Services
Academic Registrar Simon Wright LLB
Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr
Cofrestrwydd Academaidd Simon Wright LLB

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE

Tel *Ffôn* | +44(0)29 2087 9189
www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE

Sent by email to profdavidporter@me.com

28 November 2017

Dear Professor Porter,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2016–2017

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MArch (Design).

Your Report has been considered by the School in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

Issues Highlighted

1. Your suggestion to consolidate the unit-based learning outcomes from five to one.
2. Consideration of conducting the Examining Board in one day.

The following response has been provided on behalf of the School:

1. We acknowledge that one learning outcome would be easier to process for both students and examiners to read and assess, however we have 5 specific Design Thesis module learning outcomes that need to be addressed in different ways by each unit. All students are assessed against these 5 module learning outcomes that include the following:

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE
Tel *Ffôn* | +44(0)29 2087 9189
www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE
Tel *Ffôn* | +44(0)29 2087 9189
www.caerdydd.ac.uk

1. Formulating a brief;
2. Design architectural proposals;
3. Incorporating technology;
4. Presenting architectural design; and
5. Developing and testing a rigorous argument (thesis).

As these learning outcomes are relatively broad and that each unit has a differing agenda, each unit maps their expectations to these outcomes. If we were to reduce this to 1, we risk oversimplifying the expectations of a MArch graduate and lose the clarity in expectations and assessment.

2. We conducted our Design Thesis examinations in a single day this year due to a late change to avoid clashing with the European Champions League Final taking place in Cardiff over the weekend when the students were due to pin up etc. While we managed to accommodate all 6 units and examiners into one day, this caused a lot of difficulties in terms of facilities, logistics and administration. This year we have 9 units and in the foreseeable future we are likely to have more than 6 units, therefore it will not be possible to conduct all exams in a single day and instead will use two days. We introduced dedicated unit examination panels last year, so we will continue to aim to minimise travel and time needed to be spent in Cardiff for all examiners and assessors.

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 successful establishment of a new module in 'Verticality, Parametricism & Sustainability', adding greatly to the span of units on offer.

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

As this is your final year as External Examiner, we would like to thank you for your service and we are most grateful for your valuable input into this process.

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 website and will be available to all students and staff.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

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

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar