



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from [ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Ian C Ward		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	16 Longacre Road, Dronfield, S18 1UQ Formally School of Architecture, University of Sheffield		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc Sustainable MEGA Buildings <i>MSc in Sustainable Mega-Buildings</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016/17	Date of Report:	2016/17

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught stage** Examining Board in the case of **postgraduate Master's programmes**).

**Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).**

Please extend spaces where necessary.

### 1. **Programme Structure** (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

This Masters Programme focuses on very large buildings. The core modules are common with the other Masters courses in this broad area and therefore my comments relating to core issues are the same as those of the TPSD course. The structure of the programme involves the students taking a range of modules which are common to several related M.Sc. programmes followed up by elective modules. These are spread over the academic year and inevitably the assessments tend to be in the latter part of the programme. Last year the students did express some concern that at times they felt overwhelmed with project deadlines and class tests. This year I was able not only to have discussions with the students but also with the staff involved in teaching the modules. We were also fortunate to have a Skype discussion with one of the Distance Learning Students. This student was very happy with the course and commented on the professional way in which lectures were made available on the web so that these students could watch them in their own time. Although distant from the University this student felt included in the course. The class test was carried out using two video cameras so that supervision could be

carried out all be it at a distance. When I raised the issue of front loading the programme with taught modules the students were quite happy with this as they felt that it was necessary to have the knowledge before proceeding to project work. The staff had also taken on board last years comments and taken what steps they could to slightly reduce the intensity of the taught part of the programme.

**2. Academic Standards** (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

The academic standards are high and compatible with other recognised good Universities. The students are encouraged to explore the broader areas within the field of study. It must be remembered that some students find the content a little simple but as the course has to cater for students with different backgrounds this is acceptable. This point was also mentioned by the students themselves as some had dealt with part of the course content in their First Degree but not other parts. The course is also recognised by the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineering which means that the content has to meet certain standards set by an outside body which also helps to ensure that the standards are maintained.

**3. The Assessment Process** (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

All the modules were assessed by project work and only one by a class test. Part-time and distance learning students were given the same class test as full time students.

This method of assessment is appropriate for this type of course. However I felt that to some extent only having one formal test is a little light in comparison with some other courses. For the class test it would have been helpful if the external examiners were able to comment on the questions before the test was given to the students. This is normal procedure in other Universities. In some modules there was evidence of double marking but this did not seem consistent. However when discussing this point with the staff they said that rather than doing a complete double marking they asked a second marker to mark samples of work from high quality to just passing. This I feel is satisfactory. The assessment process was set against the learning objectives of the various modules and they reflect this.

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

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

This year the Department is moving towards a paperless environment which is to be commended. I was sent the access codes for the work in plenty of time for me carry out my assessments before coming to Cardiff. As some of the modules are common to the MSc in Environmental Design of Buildings the other external and myself went through together the common modules. I felt that this was extremely helpful as it gave both of us the opportunity to discuss the modules and marking schemes. One aspect of a paperless examination was that for some of the modules the students produced posters which were difficult to read on our computers. We did raise this issue with the staff and they have said that for next year they will look at this issue. In the examination room we were provided with two computers and two data

projectors which were helpful. When we arrived we met all the staff and were given their contact telephone numbers just in case we wanted to ask them any questions. Appropriate written material such as guidelines and module contents were also available in the room.

My overall comments are that the course content, assessment procedures and marks were satisfactory and the standards set last year have been maintained.

**5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

N/A

**6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement** (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

My comments last year were “There are a range of related Masters Programmes being offered by the Department and the students should be given the opportunity for interaction”. This may just be at a personal level but can be academically informative. This year the students have a “home base” in another building which they said they used. However they had some reservations about the quality of the space and the reliability of the three computers provided – at some point parts went missing. They would have liked to have space in the Bute Building as they would then have felt more linked to the Department. One aspect common to all Masters Courses in this Department is the opportunity for the students to reflect on their learning/ understanding of the subjects being taught. This is done formally through an essay and the keeping of a log book. Visiting buildings where there are significant environmental issues taken is also very important and it certainly stimulates students. However in the buildings which they visited there were issues of confidentiality of design or operating performance and therefore the students were not able to obtain as much information as was hoped for. It may possible in the future to select appropriate buildings closer to the Department which do not have such restrictions and therefore offer more information to the students. Some of the projects were very similar to the submissions being carried out in the British University in Dubai (which is partner Department to Cardiff) and I think with some forward planning there could be stronger academic links in which the students in both departments could exchange ideas and possibly work on the same project. Having looked at the submissions and course content I would say that the course is gaining in strength and is perhaps one of the leading ones in this area.

**7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)** (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

N/A

## 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?	Y		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
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		
<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?	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		
<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?			N/A
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</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>				<b>N/A</b>
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			
<b>Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)</b>				<b>N/A</b>
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			
8.30	<b>Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations.</b> <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i>			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:  
[externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk)

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE