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

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr Aylin Orbasli		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Oxford Brookes University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc Sustainable Building Conservation		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2019/20	Date of Report:	19/02/2021

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

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

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 General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

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

Please include consideration of the following:

- *confirmation that the actions taken as a result of the variation of assessments in relation to industrial action and Covid-19 have been appropriate to protect the academic standards of the programme and have allowed students to achieve their programme level learning outcomes*

The programme is clearly structured, with an appropriate balance of theoretical learning with practical applications that is spread across and within the taught modules. No notable adjustments or undue impacts on the course teaching and the students' work were noted.

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

Please include consideration of the following:

- *module marks are an accurate reflection of the standards they achieved, and the award classification reflects their academic attainment on their degree programme.*
- *if scaling has been recommended by the pre-Examining Board, there is appropriate justification for the recommendation based on the scaling guidance and the proposed scaling methodology to be applied to the marks is appropriate*
- *the application of the Safety Net Policy to ensure that students' award classification reflects their academic attainment on the degree programme, and that the degree classification is not affected by any potential dip in their academic performance in assessments undertaken during a period of disruption.*
- *Highlighting where the Safety Net Policy could not be applied/or only in part due to specific PSRB requirements and the outcomes of the discussion and decisions made.*
- *the academic standards of degrees meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications' framework.*
- *the degrees awarded by the University are valid and reliable and are of an equivalent standard to degrees awarded in previous years.*
- *confirmation that the degree outcomes of each programme under consideration are in line with the sector and meet any professional, statutory, regulatory body requirements.*
- *where issues have been identified, the main Examining Board have been clear in their deliberations and actions to safeguard the academic standards.*

The standards of achievement as evidenced in the work reviewed remain comparable to other similar master's level programmes in the UK. In reviewing the work, I did not detect a fall in quality of output compared to previous years, despite the disruptions that the students would have experienced at certain times. On the contrary the standard of work that I reviewed was generally of a high quality.

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

Please include consideration of the following:

- *assessment variations used are appropriate, and where possible continue to test the module learning outcomes*
- *students continued to be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes as a result of the variations*
- *assessments continued to be conducted with care and due diligence to ensure that students were not academically disadvantaged as a result of the variations.*

The assignments are sufficiently rigorous and across the modules support and reflect the learning outcomes of the programme. All of the assignments are of a level and complexity appropriate to a master's level programme in this subject area. There has been no change in the standard of assignments and the level of achievement that is being assessed.

4. **Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)** (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

Where possible please complete this section following the dissertation examining board determining the final award.

The Master's dissertations of the 2019-20 cohort have been delayed due to extensions granted to students. This report considers the dissertations of the 2018-19 cohort.

In the small sample of work reviewed I observed a tendency for narrative content over analysis; literature reviews tend to be source by source summaries and single sentence paragraphs of statements predominate over fully formed paragraphs that develop an argument and draw conclusions. Although they were rich on facts and collected data, they are weak in discussion and building an argument. I appreciate that this may just be the case for the two dissertations reviewed, but it may be helpful to provide some early guidance on writing styles and analysis of findings to future cohorts. However, given the quality of writing in the assignments that I have reviewed for the current cohorts, this may be of lesser concern going forward.

The marking was fair and reflective of the quality of the work and moderation process transparent.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

Please note that due to the unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, Schools may have had limited time to enact changes.

It may be related to the specific cohort, but the quality of student work that I reviewed this year was generally of a higher standard to those observed in the previous academic year.

6. **Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only)** (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

n/a

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

Due to the need for continued adaptations during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, we would be grateful if you could please include consideration of the following:

- advice and guidance on where adaptations can be made to support a blend of high-quality on-campus and online learning for 2020/21 to support Schools with curriculum developments to address ongoing requirements to socially distance due to Covid-19.*

One of the biggest challenges to a course of this nature will be the suspension of field visits and opportunities to see conservation work first hand or even engage in hands-on practical experiences. Although the academic year to which this report relates does not appear to have been unduly impacted, there will no doubt be implications for the current academic year. Circumstances permitting, it may be possible to organise virtual visits with partners on the ground. At my own University, colleagues have enhanced the student learning experience through well-coordinated virtual visits to places and sites with the help of small teams at the locations being 'visited' and online meetings and interviews with key stakeholders.

The programme staff have in the past provided additional support to students through tutorials and at the current time these will be very important and can be conducted online.

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

n/a

9. Issues for Response

To assist with a timely and detailed response to your report, we would be grateful if you could briefly summarise any issues referred to above that you would like to be specifically addressed in our institutional response.

1. Quality of master's dissertations and how students are being supported in academic writing.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.