



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof R Mark Rylatt		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	De Montfort University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MSc Environmental Design of Buildings		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013/2014	Date of Report:	14/07/2014

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

The structure of the programme is appropriate for a Masters in this field. Students are attracted from a range of backgrounds but generally report that the course has suited their needs. Innovative modules and assignments across a range of topics ensure that a balanced and detailed coverage of the field is achieved. The proliferation of assessed units while obviously demanding of staff time does at least give confidence that the stated aims and learning outcomes of the course are achievable. There was one example of a module where students considered that they had not been adequately prepared for an assignment but this was perhaps the result of a rare breakdown of communication. Students reported some problems with course software complaining that expertise was not always available across the course team but this may be because it has only recently been adopted.

2. Academic Standards

The standards set are clearly comparable with other similar courses in the UK. Students gain grounding in industry standard approaches and tools applicable in a variety of building design situations and this is set in an appropriate master's level academic context. Although the course gives research minded students a good basis for doctoral research in his area, it does not seem to attract many students with research potential. This does not reflect the quality of the course or the talents and enthusiasm of the course team but perhaps rather a trend in UK Masters courses generally to attract international students with different ambitions.

3. The Assessment Process

There a good balance of assessment methods and the marking schemes are generally clear and appropriate. Where there were requirements for deliverables that meet specific professional standards of presentation and articulation there was perhaps a reluctance to fail students who showed some understanding of the underlying subject matter but did not otherwise satisfy the marking criteria (e.g. did not submit a recognisable technical report where this was required). Formal marking is generally consistent and feedback is good but some complaint was noted among students concerning informal feedback, which was thought not always to be consistent with the final grade. However, these were probably isolated examples and the course team was clearly aware of them and will take corrective action. There were some examples of students who performed uniformly badly in class tests. This may be due to language difficulties rather than a lack of basic knowledge – these students in any case seem to have performed badly in other assessed work, which suggests that the marking is consistent.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

My first year but there was an impression that the standard of the student cohort was lower than previously. There is no clear evidence that overall performance was significantly worse but there was a sense that the course team were struggling to foster the level of intellectual ambition that would be desirable in an advanced Masters cohort. This may be attributable to changing characteristics of the student mix.

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

Adequate. Meeting with retiring examiners from previous year was a great help.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

Generally very helpful and detailed feedback was provided by the markers.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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)
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/A
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
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?			N/A
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
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				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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		
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?			
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?			

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