



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof. Gerald Adler		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Kent School of Architecture/ University of Kent		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	M Arch Dissertation		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-14	Date of Report:	14/05/14

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 Dissertation continues to be well structured. Although the ‘social sciences’ model adopted by the School serves students well in learning to be thorough and consequential in their work, especially during the early months of research, such a rigid structure can impair fluency in developing the more discursive arguments favoured by some topics. Most students opted for the ‘automatic’ adoption of case studies where perhaps greater criticality and analysis is called for.

2. Academic Standards

Standards continue to be robust in the School, with broad agreement between the external and internal examiners. I feel there was more of a bunching of competent work this year compared with last, with fewer exceptionally strong or weak dissertations. This does not concern me – I believe it is a credit to the School that the great majority of graduates emerge with such high skills in writing, compiling reports and, indeed, critical thinking.

I look forward to the RIBA awards in November to see whether the School repeats its success of 2012.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment procedures were clear, logical and admirably fair: the students can rest assured that their work has been amply reviewed, and held up to rigorous scrutiny.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

My questions to the students concerning their experience of the learning and teaching process confirms my impression which I began to articulate a year ago that they are aware of their peers' topics, even if, inevitably, they go their own ways as the work specialises and intensifies. Without exception, they could appreciate the point of writing a dissertation, and they seem to be fully aware of the procedures the School adopts for this module. For many of the students there was a healthy relationship between the dissertation topic and their major design project.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There are several aspects which might be strengthened amongst the students, in order to enhance their research capabilities and hone their presentation skills, with the aim of producing work of a still higher standard. Skills and techniques in drawn analysis could be improved – I imagine a workshop on this topic would yield results – which would increase fluency in graphic communication. It is an aspect that architecture students would take to naturally. Secondly, and more difficult to engineer, would be to instil a greater depth of historical understanding. In the average to weak dissertations this was something distinctly lacking, but can only really come about through deeper and broader engagement with a wide variety of architectural, cultural and historical texts.

As mentioned in 4. above I sensed that there was a healthy relationship between a student's dissertation topic and the nature of his or her studio work.

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?			N/A
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			N/A
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?			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
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?			N/A
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?			N/A
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

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