



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Takero Shimazaki		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Architectural Association, London UK		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc in Architectural Studies Year 3		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2013-2014	Date of Report:	10.7.2014

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 programme structure and the Unit system continue to be of good nature and helps focus the different agenda set by the Unit tutors. The year long course helps students to get deeper into their research and produced very good level of projects. The Units seem more focused and rigorous compared to last year.

### 2. Academic Standards

As in the previous year, the academic level is high. The course offers a very solid background to becoming an architect at work. The students are able to train on varying elements of being an architect, including overall planning, theoretical research, general arrangement plans and sections, detailing and presentation skills. Also, some of the technical studies and investigations seem to help the projects very well. The school is particularly strong in these technical areas and delivering resolved architectural projects at this level.

However, criticism of this solid approach would be in the lack of questioning of their architectural agenda by the students. This was particularly apparent in the essays on architectural theory. Most of the writing materials seemed to have been a collection of references and already published arguments, rather than statement of their own argument. This trend perhaps also carried over to the design projects where apart from some of the top students, the panel felt some projects could have had clearer vision and intent.

### **3. The Assessment Process**

The assessment process is well organised, welcoming and very helpful. The days seem too long in the current set up where the panels see very few projects each day and are asked to provide feedback of the entire year group. The staff interests and the briefs for the projects are excellent and the students seem to respond well. The fact (set up by the University) that the external examiners have no say in the final results is strange. This does not happen in the institution that I work at and prevents the external examiners from having valuable contribution. At the Architectural Association, the external examiners are the ones that dictate the final outcome. This is also not an ideal scenario, however a more balanced discussion at least of the final grade would be welcome.

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

Some of the comments made from last year's exams have been taken on board. One of the most pleasing aspect was the focus of each brief. Each tutor seems to have limited the amount of references to only what is highly relevant to the subject in the brief. This meant that, compared to last year, the briefs were more varied across the year and therefore the student had a wider selection of direction of their study.

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

N/A

### **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

- Students should be trained to understand 'scale' much more. Some of the spaces seen in the photoshop enhanced images are not what they are on plans and sections.
- Would welcome to see much more 'hands-on' models, testing materials and being exposed to more samples other than card or foam board.
- Tighter transition from the initial theoretical, historical, contextual research into proposals. The jump from the early part of the design exercise seem too sudden and some of the careful analysis are lost.
- More self awareness and critical judgement in the design process as commented last year.
- Enhance the technical abilities further. It is one of the special qualities of the school. This does not necessarily need to be dry. Rigour in detailing and technical understanding could potentially lead to very creative results.

### **7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)**

## 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?		N	
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
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?		N	
<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?			N/A
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
8.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	<b>N (Due to my own injury)</b>		
8.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?			
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?	<b>Y</b>		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</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?			

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto: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