



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.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Phyllida Mills		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Mills Power Ltd		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BSc Architecture		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017	Date of Report:	13/08/2017

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)

The BSc Architecture Degree is structured as a series of design briefs, developing from year to year, in complexity and the extent to which the student devises their own project in response to the brief. Lectures, seminars, reading and visits feed in to the students' knowledge and skills. Projects/design responses/portfolios are expected to address the collective, critical position across the School of 'grounded creativity' and show evidence based design, environmental and technical knowledge and a social sensibility and responsibility.

The programme is well structured from year to year, the first, second and third year having each a very different emphasis, which provides clear progression, but at the same time, can be disjointed in terms of continuously developing the architectural student's creativity and skills.

The first year is akin to a foundation in spatial sensibility and design and successfully challenges the student to be thoughtful and creative. Accurate orthographic drawing of design proposals was moderately convincing and should receive greater emphasis. One of the projects, perhaps a shortish, final project should provide a

bridge to the second year with a grounded architectural brief that challenges the student to bring their awakened creativity to a more prosaic looking problem.

The second year is a rigorous grounding in the technical aspects of architectural design in context, covering two different scales of building and a wide range of structural and environmental threads. Evidence of a thorough exposition of the technical threads was seen in portfolios, but rather prosaically integrated into design proposals. The projects lacked evidence of exploration and understanding of context, and the creativity apparent in first year work had diminished markedly. The integration of technical teaching with creativity in design projects needs to be reviewed by the School.

The third year offers a wide range of units sharing a general theme of 'architecture and justice'. The units posed diverse briefs and created a variety of design responses. Students embraced the freedom to develop their own ideas into successful designs, however, a significant number evidently struggled to settle early in the year and get going. The work presented for examination did not always look like a full year's considered output. Setting a single programme to be developed through the whole year is challenging for third years and a warm up brief prior to the longer brief, may enable more students to be successful.

- There is a tendency to set long projects in all years, each with a wide range of required outputs. Some shorter projects should be interspersed to allow students to practice in short time turning a response to a brief into a finished output, whether a design with a plan, a structural or material proposal, a ventilation or daylight solution or a context study. The students will then have more experience and ultimately skill in the iterative process of design - turning concept into resolution. Not every project needs to tackle every aspect of design.
- Each year's teaching is built on the last, and some thinking about what each year can expect from the incoming student would help to integrate the course further and build on its strengths.
- Clarity in orthographic drawing should receive some focus along with general drawn communication skills. Second and third year students should be able to present accurate (not Escher like, spatially discontinuous) plans and sections of increasingly complex ambition. Drawings generally should be more powerful and stand alone to communicate the student's intentions, struggles and resolution of the project, relying less on lengthy verbal description.
- The school has strong technical teaching, taught as blocks integrated into project design. This is most successful when students are able to grasp the principles to inform their design rather than focus on abstract calculations. Despite detailed technical drawings presented, questioning of third years by the School's examiners revealed a tentative grasp of the principles of the technical aspects of their design. Use of shorter projects to immerse a student into designing with a single technical aspect (light, ventilation or thermal comfort) could lead to a firmer grasp of the basics. Not every project across the School needs to tick every technical box.

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

Academic standards are appropriate. The spread of achievement was satisfactory.

The School should consider, however, that some students should be capable of achieving very high levels, and consider ways of further stretching students to achieve really excellent, comprehensive portfolios.

The layout of the premises of the school limits visibility of the work being produced and the diploma students are not in the same building. Architectural students learn significantly from seeing each other develop as designers and challenging each other. Consideration should be given to how the school can improve possibilities for students seeing each other's work, not just on pin up/crit days, in particular the second and third years would benefit from seeing the diploma students at work.

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

The process is clear and fair. Third year students would benefit from an indication of their level at an earlier stage during the year.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]
None.

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)

Appropriate preparation was provided to me as a new external examiner.

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

No comment.

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)
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				
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			N/A

	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?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
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?			N/A
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A
8.30	Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i> N/A			

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

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