

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

Cardiff University

McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff CF24 0DE
Wales UK

Tel please see below
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.cardiff.ac.uk

Prifysgol Caerdydd

Tŷ McKenzie
30-36 Heol Casnewydd
Caerdydd CF24 0DE
Cymru Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn gweler isod
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4130

www.caerdydd.ac.uk

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	David Short		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	University of Nottingham		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	BSc in Architectural Studies		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017-18	Date of Report:	29/11/2018

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board.

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)

It was noted last year that there was a lack of continuity between the years. This year it was good to understand that a primer project had been introduced between years 1 and 2 to help the transition across these years.

However I believe the Course would benefit by looking closely at what the expectations of the outcomes at the end of year 3 should be at the highest end of expectation and reviewing how you might achieve this against what is being done at the moment. Although the basic structure and content is sound I believe there is evidence of disjuncture between taught lecture module delivery and studio that without detracting from either could be crafted to become more relevant. This cropped up in a discussion with staff at the end of day one. I would also recommend that in year 1 students are asked to resolve functional and spatial relationships perhaps across two storeys in their studio projects, to develop and test their skills further in advance of year 2. My guidance would be to retain what you to have in the poetic and narrative but to produce a slightly more complex brief. Year 1 is perhaps a key year in stimulating students' interest in designing buildings and then providing them with the secure basic skills to translate the interest into a confidence in their ability. I worry that there are not enough opportunity to make students aware of some basic functional design requirements.

Year 2 studio then requires this functional response in two large design projects; a small group of houses and a school project. These now develop the scale and complexity of design in an appropriate way whilst demanding specific responses to site. However the nature of the two briefs required the arrangement of a series of similar repetitive units, houses in the first project and classrooms in the second. This involved students in the assemblage of these functional units but perhaps did not open up the opportunity to explore spatial and other architectural qualities that may be useful preparation for year 3.

I believe that this may be having a cumulative effect on the year 3 studio outcomes. Reflecting on the year 3 work overall there is a basic and general competency but more generally perhaps a lack of enquiry in depth and evidence of really good students pushing forward.

I reviewed also the Practice and Management module which is an extremely well structured, well delivered and appropriately assessed module. I also looked at the Humanities modules in year 2 and 3 and although the content of this seemed to be interesting and engaging involving a number of diverse topics relevant to different lecturers' interests, I was a little concerned that the assignment seemed to almost be disconnected from this content. However the assignment essays in year 3 provide a good bridge for students to use this piece of work and study to help with their studio projects.

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

I thought the marking standards were completely appropriate. There is a competency and consistency in the work across all years. However I believe there is still scope for the quality of the work at the top end of studio project work to be strengthened both in terms of the quality and number of students attaining good studio outcomes. This in turn would have the effect of pulling other middle work along with it.

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

A previous comment that final year students were not aware of where their studio work stood in relation to marking standards until the end of the year had been acted upon with the introduction of a mid-point portfolio review with an indicative grade given.

I referred in 1 above to suggestions that might help improve the scope and standard of the studio work. This year I was only able to sit in on 3 different studio units in year 3 due the limited availability of a third examiner. I came away feeling that I really only had a limited snapshot of the final year's work.

As far as the final year long studio module is concerned there still seems to be almost everything riding on the final interview of the student in front of an external and internal assessor. The contribution to the mark of the first semester's work seems to also be slightly opaque and variable in substance. This could still do with a clarifying statement of how this early work is valued across the different units.

Overall however there is a consistent strength to the work coming from the students that is good to see.

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

Not Applicable

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

I referred above to actions taken from the previous year's comment. I understand also that more action is to follow but this has been delayed by the University frameworks and timescales.

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)

This year I only received information about the examination days very late. I also had not received any advanced notice of the dates. I had pencilled in assumed dates based on last year. This was particularly difficult as a decision had been taken by the school to extend the examination period across three days this year as opposed to two days last year.

It is worth noting that the process was handicapped this year by the absence of a third examiner over the first day.

I would also find it useful to receive sight of the different studio units' briefs for the final year studio module in advance to enable familiarisation ahead of the visit.

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

There is a committed and excellent group of tutors engaged in delivering all modules that I saw. I believe that the individual contributions made can be enhanced for the benefit of student outcomes and also staff satisfaction by greater communication between staff about individual modules and their contribution to the course as a whole. Any discourse should also engage part-time studio unit heads.

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

9. 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				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?		N	
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		N	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
Examination scripts				
9.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?		N	
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?		N	
Coursework and practical assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?		N	
Examining board meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
9.19	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)				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			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