

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

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof Katie Lloyd Thomas		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Newcastle University		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MArch AR5002 Dissertation		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2018-19	Date of Report	13.04.19

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)

We only see one module on the programme – which is well structured. Especially encouraging to see some cases where students had defined their topic early and used their period in practice for research.

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

I saw a full range of marks in the module, including a fail, and can confirm it meets QAA and benchmark standards, and demonstrates parity in terms of word length, expectations and marking with other similar modules in the UK. I was particularly pleased to see that at all levels of achievement almost all the cohort this year seemed passionate about their chosen topic.

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

I was pleased to see the team using a fuller spectrum of marks, though on some occasions the final mark (after two markers have come to agreement between their two marks) became more cautious than it should - I would encourage the team to reward good work (even if it does not score high on all the criteria) and to take care to match second markers to each dissertation's disciplinary approach.

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

This year saw a much-improved marking process – with two internal markers agreeing a final mark before external examiners visited, and a 10% mark awarded for the viva in itself. This allowed very good discussions between markers (and external) about the viva mark. If this percentage went up a little (15-20%) it could leave some flexibility for the viva to make a real difference to bands in some cases. Markers are thorough in their comments on the feedback sheets, but sometimes follow the criteria too diligently without including free comment about the content and distinctiveness of the dissertation.

5. **Year-on-Year Comments**

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

This was the best year of dissertations I've seen and it was excellent to see student so engaged with their topics, and often keen to take their research and thinking forward in their career. I also appreciated seeing more students breaking away from the classic Cardiff structure (RQ, lit review / 'theory', case study) with different structures reflecting more iterative and independent research processes.

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)

Arrangements are always very well handled, and it is great to have the viva as an opportunity to meet students – more time to read dissertations would be welcome if at all possible. We would appreciate **all** supervisors being able to join us for lunch.

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

There were many more socially-engaged dissertations this year – which is great to see – but also a preponderance of interviews and questionnaires that were not always the most relevant method. The school could still make more of the particular skills of architecture students to use visual methods in their research and – given this is a compulsory module - consider other forms of dissertation output (experiment-based, prototyping, film, creative practice etc) that could particularly benefit students for whom writing is not a strong point. And consider instituting some events where the cohort (and the incoming cohort) can enjoy and learn from each other's work.

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?	y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?		n	
Commenting on draft examination question papers				n/a
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			“
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			“
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			“
Examination scripts				n/a
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?			“
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			“
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			“
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			“
9.10	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				
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)				n/a
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			‘
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?			n/a
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	
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