



Academic & Student Support Services  
Academic Registrar Simon Wright LLB  
*Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr*  
*Cofrestrwydd Academaidd Simon Wright LLB*

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 0DE

Tel *Ffôn* | +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

*Prifysgol Caerdydd*  
*Tŷ McKenzie*  
*30-36 Heol Casnewydd*  
*Caerdydd CF24 0DE*

**Sent by email to [phyllidamills@millspower.com](mailto:phyllidamills@millspower.com)**

**28 September 2017**

Dear Ms Mills,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2016–2017**

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the BSc in Architectural Studies.

Your Report has been considered by the School in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

**Issues Highlighted**

1. Tendency to set long projects with a wide range of required outputs in all years and suggested benefits of interspersing some shorter projects.
2. 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.
3. Clarity in orthographic drawing should receive some focus along with general drawn communication skills.
4. Stretching students to achieve really excellent, comprehensive portfolios
5. The layout of the premises of the school limits visibility of the work being produced and opportunities for BSc students to see MArch students at work.
6. Third year students would benefit from an indication of their level at an earlier stage during the year.

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**The following response has been provided on behalf of the School:**

1. Thank you for this interesting comment which will be referred to the design module leaders for their consideration.
2. The School agrees that more attention needs to be paid to the continuity between years, particularly in the movement from first year to second year.
3. Assisting the students in acquiring fluency, accuracy and creativity in orthographic drawing remains a core concern of the BSc programme which the School will continue to address.
4. The challenge of attaining very high standards at the top end of the years is one that we will continue to address.
5. We are aware of the difficulties of working across two sites, particularly with respect to the separation of the MArch programme (which you refer to as the Diploma) from the BSc. In the medium term the School has plans to move all teaching back into a single site - a move which is dependent on a planned increase in available teaching space. In the interim the School will continue to reinforce its strategies for cross year 'fertilisation' through cross year contact etc.
6. The provision of an interim stage mark, or indicative grade will be considered in the coming session as a part of the School's review of design assessment. The issue is linked to that of adequately registering the differences between the intentions of each unit in summative assessment and explicitly addressing the research phase outputs of the project-work in assessment and feedback.

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. provision of appropriate support to prepare you for your role.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we thank you for your continued support of the programme.

In order to meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on the University website and will be available to all students and staff.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of

detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar