

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:	Ian C Ward		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Consultant, Ex Sheffield University School of Architecture		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc in Sustainable Mega-Buildings		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017/2018	Date of Report:	

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)

The structure of the programme involves the students taking a range of modules which are common to several related M.Sc. programmes followed up by elective modules. These are spread over the academic year and inevitably the assessments tend to be in the latter part of the programme. All the assessments except one were by project submissions. The one “Class Test” which was carried out under examination conditions proved a little difficult for some students. When I asked them about this several indicated that they had never sat an examination before and therefore were unfamiliar with the process. All the assessments were submitted on-line and therefore the programme has moved to a paperless environment. This is to be welcomed, however at times I found it a little difficult not being able to look at paper submissions, particularly extended reports – could not “flick through pages” easily to check information.

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

The academic standards are high and the students are encouraged to explore the broader areas within the field of study. However some of the subjects tackled could be regarded as undergraduate in nature but given the wide range of first degrees

which the students come on to the course with these areas have to be dealt. The academic standards of this course are among the highest in the UK and they have been maintained for several years.

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

All the modules were assessed by project work apart from one class test. Part-time and distance learning students were given the same class test as full-time students and the examination process monitored

This method of assessment is appropriate for this type of course. The assessment process was set against the learning objectives of the various modules and they reflect this.

Overall the capabilities of the students following either route could be favourably compared. There were some differences between the students but this could be attributed to their background (engineering or architecture for example).

The marking process was satisfactory but in some cases I felt that the feedback given to the students could be improved, also where dual marking was used it was not always clear to the examiners if all work was dual marked or indeed who marked the work. When the tutors were asked about this they gave satisfactory answers.

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

The dissertations have yet to be submitted. However when I asked the students about how they selected their topic it transpired that they made their selection quite early on in the programme and some felt that they would like more time before deciding on the subject they wish to explore. One or two mentioned that they did discuss this with their tutors and they were sympathetic to their views and could make some changes. The topics chosen by the students were appropriate for the course taken.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

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

Last year I expressed some concerns regarding the space allocated to the Masters programme and the computing facilities available. I also made some comments regarding the site visits undertaken.

I was pleased to see that the students had a new dedicated working area and the computing facilities had been significantly improved. The site visits are very important in this type of programme and the ones selected were appropriate. However I felt that the visits were too early in the programme for the students to fully understand what the issues were in large buildings. It is important that the students are exposed to real buildings and therefore early visits can be seen as showing the students the type of issues which will be addressed in the teaching programme. However it would be of some relevance to take the students to buildings nearer the end of the programme so that they can better understand how their academic

studies have been used in real buildings. I also feel that the programme does not fully take advantage of their strong links with the British University in Dubai whose programme was developed by your Department. Some of the design modules are very similar in both Departments and given the ease of communications between students in different countries it would be interesting for both sets of students to carry out a similar project and to compare findings.

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)

N/A

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

This is a good course and over my time as examiner I have noted that the staff have been enthusiastic and innovative. This has resulted in the course being slightly modified over the years which has ensured that it is still relevant and standards improved.

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

When I first started the courses were relatively new and the staff (in some cases were new to academic teaching). Obviously with anything new there will be some “rough edges” which I am pleased to say have been addressed and are now no longer an issue. The staff have become more confident and have been keen to improve both delivery and assessment methods. The students passed on very complimentary remarks about the dedication of the staff. Space and computing issues have also been addressed. All this is positive for the future. Such courses are expensive to run and therefore it is not always feasible to do everything the tutors would like, however, it appears that not enough is spent on site visits which I feel for such a course is of some importance.

For the future I feel that the course as it stands is solid and of a high academic standard and the staff should ensure that this is maintained. Giving good feedback to the student on their work as well as information regarding the course structure and the reasons for doing things in a particular way could be improved and the staff are aware of this.

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

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	X		
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?	X		
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?			X
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			

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