



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Joanna van Heyningen		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	none		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	BSc Architecture		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014-15	Date of Report:	21.06.2015

For completion by External Examiner in the spaces provided. Please extend spaces where necessary. **Please note this Form will be published online.**

1. Programme Structure

The BSc is well organised, with each of 7 units offering a genuine choice of programme and teaching style to the students. Inevitably, some units were stronger, with better teaching, than others. Students, (on our third day we met a group with approx. two from each unit) were very supportive of their tutors and of the school, although some felt they had received plenty of encouragement but not enough critical (and therefore helpful) teaching.

On the whole the students echoed what I felt, namely that too long was taken doing master-planning and brief-writing, leaving them too little time to develop their building project in depth. My impression was that this did not allow staff to give adequate attention to helping students bring materiality to their projects. I wanted to see more living, breathing buildings, and to know that students had thought about what it was like to experience those buildings.

Those students who were given a clear brief, one that was appropriate to a third year architecture student, benefited.

In some cases, however, the tutors had indeed paced their unit well. I felt that the tutors might benefit from collaborating with one another on this issue of pacing.

Although the students all said they preferred to do their master-planning studies as individually, I felt that group work at the beginning of the third year would be of pedagogic use to them, and could contribute to better pacing.

2. Academic Standards

Solid. Good.

There was, however, not enough evidence in studio work of training/teaching in structural and environmental issues.

As last year, I felt that presentation standards were very mixed, but that in general too much emphasis was placed on creating attractive images using photo-shop to produce texture, rather than the proper examination of a proposition in plan and section which would be proper for a BSc student. This is unhelpful to student architects who need to get to grips with the fact that a line on a drawing results in built reality. I would like the architects of our future environment to be aware of this.

I felt students would be helped by being encouraged to create at the outset a story board of their presentation, so that they are aiming towards a bigger picture. This is also an extremely helpful design tool.

I also felt frustrated by students' relying on verbal explanations of what their drawings were intended to convey. Simple diagrams could be used to explain a concept, and I feel strongly spaces should be labelled so that the drawing is intelligible without a verbal commentary.

3. The Assessment Process

The staff at Cardiff had worked scrupulously in their internal marking of the BSc, and were talented and dedicated people. I was very pleased indeed that external examiners' involvement was much more meaningful this year than last. We saw a considerable proportion of the students, and were able to witness their final interview and marking, and take part in an internal discussion (not in the presence of the student).

- I was happy to come for 3 days, because they were useful.
- I was very happy to meet a good proportion of the students on the third day.
- It was frustrating to meet the unit teachers fleetingly over lunch on the first day. This meant we did not have the opportunity to pass on and discuss our comments on the students' work and on their teaching. It is quite understandable that there should be only one meeting, but I recommend, as I did last year, that its timing should change.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

It seemed to me that the first and second year work was appropriate, and that it prepared its students for the BSc properly.

5. Preparation / Induction Activity (for new External Examiners only)

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

No comments so far.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

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?	Y		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?		N	
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
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?	Y		
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
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?		N	
Clinical Examinations (if applicable)				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
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 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?			
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			

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

ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry & Academic Services, Cardiff University,
McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE