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Sent by email to Professor Ian Ward

01 February 2019

Dear Professor Ward,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2017/18

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MSc in Sustainable Mega-Buildings & MSc in Theory and Practice of Sustainable Design.

Your report has been considered by the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

Issues highlighted in your report:

1. **Programme Structure:** Assessment methods differed in one module, with a class test used. This meant some students felt less familiar with this method.
2. **Programme Structure:** Online assessment submission is welcomed, but can make going through long papers difficult.
3. **Academic Standards:** Recruitment from a wide range of subject backgrounds means that some of the programme subjects are necessarily undergraduate in nature.
4. **Assessment Process:** Some feedback to students could be improved.
5. **Assessment Process:** Greater clarity needed on whether all work has been dual marked, and who the markers are.

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6. **Master's Dissertations:** Topics selected early in the year, meant some students felt they would have liked more time to consider their subject.
7. **Year on Year Comments:** Site visits were too early in the programme for the students to fully understand what the issues were in large buildings, and to apply knowledge from their academic studies to real buildings.
8. **Year on Year Comments:** The programme does not seem to fully take advantage of the strong links with the British University in Dubai whose programme was developed by the School.

Response provided by the School:

1. The ART 041 'Class Test' is part of a shared module with all architecture science Masters courses, not only by Sustainable Mega Buildings. The class test is integral to the assessment of the understanding of the students of building physics principles. In the future, we will need to make sure that prospective applicants (all MSc courses) are aware that they have to sit a class test in the CCE module. We will also need to make sure that students with adequate knowledge of science are admitted in the MSc courses. For example, students with a background in landscape architecture are not usually suitable for MSc courses unless they demonstrate reasonable understanding of building physics.
2. We will have hard copies of the extended reports ready for the external examiners to examine in the future.
3. We would be happy to discuss any subject areas that the external examiner has concerns about.
4. We are confident that most of our feedbacks are elaborate and helpful, however, we will attempt to improve those few cases of feedbacks in the future.
5. For dual marking, we follow a standard university procedure and, therefore, marks within some ranges are dual marked. However, we will try to keep the process as transparent as possible in the future. For the ART041 CCE class tests, we prepare model answers reviewed by two internal examiners and therefore, CCE class test papers do not need dual marking.
5. Dissertations are part of the Architectural Science Research module which is a shared module. Currently, students are allowed to change their topic at a later stage if they want to, and in future, the topic selection will happen nearer to the start of the dissertation.
6. The site visits are linked to the specialist modules. For ART631, we arranged the site visit during the end of the first week of the 6-week long first phase of the module (site and building analysis). For this year, we have already moved this particular site visit to the end of the third week. However, the schedules of

site visits are sometimes influenced by the convenience of the host organisations.

7. We are aware of the external examiner's links with the British University in Dubai, and we would be pleased to work with the external examiner to initiate a collaboration. However the costs of a study trip may be prohibitive, so any collaboration would need to be online.

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process;
2. 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.
3. It was pleasing to see that the students had a new dedicated working area and the computing facilities had been significantly improved.
4. This is a good course and it is 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.
5. The staff have become more confident and have been keen to improve both delivery and assessment methods.
6. The students passed on very complimentary remarks about the dedication of the staff.
7. Space and computing issues have also been addressed.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and 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's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

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

Yours sincerely,



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