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Sent by email to Professor Pieter de Wilde

08 August 2019

Dear Professor de Wilde,

Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MSc Environmental Design of Buildings (EDB).

Your report has been considered by colleagues in 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](#).

The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. The distance learning element of the programme keeps doing extremely well, and is increasing student numbers. The programme team is commended for the hard work that goes into this extra load.

Issues highlighted in your report response provided by the School:

1. ***Programme Structure:*** Further support for the job search that comes after completion of the course.

Current support for employment after programme completion includes:

- Provision of letters of recommendation.
- Industrial representatives invited to lecture and crit, giving opportunities for students to make enquiries about job opportunities.
- Circulation of job opportunities via email and through a LinkedIn group which includes past students.
- Raising awareness of the CU Careers Service support available



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We are also always exploring ways in which the course might more directly lead to related employment, including through closer ties with Industry and Practice.

2. **Assessment Process:** *Variation in the amount of assessment feedback provided.*

A meeting of module leaders about this issue took place last year and there was general agreement to move towards giving feedback via grademark and rubrics. This transition has required time for module leaders to become familiar with the grademark tool.

However, different feedback should be expected from modules of different length and with significantly different student numbers. This has been discussed with the external examiner in the context of managing student expectations. This will be communicated to students at induction this year.

3. **Year-on-Year Comments:** *Consider reducing the number of modules.*

The restructuring of the programme to reduce the number of modules is still under review. The EDB programme structure is complex as it accommodates local full-time, local 2 year part-time, distance full-time, distance 2 year part-time and distance 3 year part-time versions. There are also plans for a CPD offering which better fits a 10-credit module structure, so these all need consideration.

In addition to this a key member of staff (the previous programme leader) has recently returned from a two year leave. We would like to allow time for her to re-familiarise herself with the programme so that she can fully contribute to discussions about any changes of structure. This has been discussed with the external examiner who agreed that a thorough response to this action was more important than a rapid one.

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,



Mr Simon Wright
Academic Registrar