



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Ian C Ward		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Consultant, previously School of Architecture, University of Sheffield		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Sustainable Mega-Buildings (MEGA) <i>MSc in Sustainable Mega-Buildings</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2015	Date of Report:	15/07/2015

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

This is a new Masters Programme focusing on very large buildings. The core modules are common with the other Masters courses in this broad area and therefore my comments relating to core issues are the same as those of the TPSD course. 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. When I met with the students they did express some concern that at times they felt overwhelmed with project deadlines and class tests. Some students felt that they were unable to give the appropriate amount of time to specific tests because of the above. It would be difficult to modify the programme as the students must learn the basics before they can apply their knowledge in project work. It may be worth looking at the times for the class tests and try to ensure that the students have more time to revise.

2. Academic Standards

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 with – specifically SAP assessments. Being a new course it is difficult to compare the

academic standards with other courses but my overall impression is that the standards are high.

3. The Assessment Process

All the modules were assessed by either class tests or project work. Part-time and distance learning students were given the same class tests as full time students. 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. On my visit to the School I was given all submitted work including all class tests including sample answers.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

1. Core modules

Last year there were some new staff appointed and they obviously needed time to come to terms with the programme. This year the programme has benefited from having staff in place for at least one year. Having spoken to some of the staff it became clear that they were enthusiastic about the course and were keen to expose the students to as many learning experiences as possible.

I was given a copy of the module mark comparison from 2012 to the present day and overall the marks compared favourably with the exception of ART026/076 and ART023/073 where the marks were lower. This was pointed out to me by the staff. In the case of ART026/076 a new lecturer was appointed just before the course started but this was not put forward as a reason for the low marks. This particular subject (Building Services) has always posed a problem for students with an architectural or non-technical background in other Architectural Departments in the UK and therefore these marks could be said to be consistent with other institutions. Module ART023/073 also showed a poorer performance than last year. I was informed by the staff that these two modules will be combined into a single module for the next academic year and I would like to be given the opportunity to comment on the contents.

2. The supplementary modules were appropriate for the objectives of this course and visits to large buildings is totally appropriate. The projects involving the analysis of these buildings is a good one particularly as the students were given the opportunity to visit the building which they were to analyse. However in two of the buildings they were not allowed access and/or the talks given by staff (in the buildings) were not appropriate and did not give the students the opportunity to fully assess the buildings. For next year it would be wise for the tutors to select buildings where the students could have access and information about the building/s being given by knowledgeable staff from them. It did appear that mega buildings was being taken as high rise buildings – which is true, but no inference was given to very large low rise buildings such as large shopping centres or distribution centres. One comment from the students was that when they were dealing with computer simulation they were not informed of the wide range of programmes which could be used. This is a common issue with such courses as some students come from a different academic background where they have used other programmes. Perhaps it might be appropriate for the staff to include a session in which they outline other simulation packages available commercially.

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

N/A.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

There are a range of related Masters Programmes being offered by the Department and the students from each one (core modules) which offers the opportunity for interaction between the students. This may just be at a personal level but can be academically informative. One aspect common to all Masters Courses in this Department is the opportunity for the students to reflect on their learning/ understanding of the subjects being taught. This is done formally through an essay and the keeping of a log book. Visiting buildings where there are significant environmental issues taken is also very important and it certainly stimulates students. This new module is an exciting departure from the standard sustainable buildings type of course and although some small amount of modification will be necessary for next year it will remain a leader in its field.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only)

N/A.

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?		N	
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?	Y		
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?		N	
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

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