



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

The completion of this Report is supported by *Annual Report Form – Guidance to External Examiners*. The Guidance and this Form are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>. Fee information and claim forms are available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/fees/index.html>.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Dr. Mark Campbell		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Architectural Association, London		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	Architecture / M.Arch Dissertations		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-2017	Date of Report:	08 August 2017

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 structure and aims of the program are clear. The dissertation process of research, formulation, supervision and completion is clearly laid-out in the Module Handbook. This process provides the student cohort with an efficient framework and methodology through which to pursue their thesis.

Students are provided with opportunities to formulate and discuss their work with peers and faculty, which provides the potential for research streaming and cross-fertilisation. There is a wide range of supervisors and the general level of available supervisory support remains commendable.

2. Academic Standards

The standard of the dissertations and quality of the students in defending the work was very good in relation to comparable institutions. The intellectual value of the dissertation module to student development is obvious and there were several well-produced dissertations over a wide range of topics. In comparison to previous years, however, the level of this cohort's achievement appeared weaker than previous years. (This follows the trend of a gentle decline in the level of student theses over the past two years.) In general the formulation and execution of the dissertation topics seemed effective in furthering the student's engagement with architecture - this engagement was often apparent during the oral examination.

3. The Assessment Process

The assessment process for the module is exemplary: it is detailed, rigorous and fair. The Internal Assessment of the dissertations includes several readings, which generally provided a comprehensive and balanced assessment of the individual dissertations. However, in a few cases there was a marked disparity between the assessment and the actual intellectual achievement of the work – a disparity that tended toward the student work being assessed at a higher level.

Finally, the oral examination provides an invaluable – and unique – opportunity for the student to discuss and defend their work in detail. In particular, the oral examination is commendable as it allows both a detailed assessment of the work and the opportunity for the student to relate the dissertation to their overall interests at the conclusion of their degree.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

Overall, the standard and execution of the dissertations seemed weaker than in previous years. This follows a similar – but gentle – decline in the 2015-15 dissertations relative to the 2013-14 and 2014-15 presentations. This is reflected less in the quality of writing and presentation of the work, than in the depth and scope of the subject research. By comparison, in previous years the general level of research seemed more engaged with the chosen topics.

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

N/A

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement

The rigor with which the assessment process is undertaken is commendable.

In particular, the final oral examination provides a useful forum in which to discuss the student's work and their approach to and knowledge of the topic. This allows an opportunity to correlate the written work with the student's knowledge of their chosen subject area, together with facilitating a discussion of the value of the dissertation to their overall architectural knowledge and future ambitions.

In terms of enhancement, the general engagement with topic research could be stressed and developed. The adherence to a general methodology – in which the contextual theoretical formulation followed by case studies – is demonstrably useful in preparing weaker students to formulate and complete the dissertation. However, it does seem that this approach has become a default. It may prove worthwhile to reinvigorate the discussion of the research – stressing its value as an architectural investigation – with both individual students and in collective discussions. In particular, this would allow students to compare approaches and methodologies and share interests.

In the case of the most intellectually able students, it would also be productive to consider what other methods could be employed to push these dissertations further.

For example, such students may benefit from additional group presentations, or additional supervisions.

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?	Y		
Draft Examination Question Papers				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
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?			N/A
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/A
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