

# EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)



External Examiners are required to complete and submit Reports at least annually and within one month of the programme Examining Board.

Completed External Examiner Report Forms should be sent to:

[ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk)

Arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses will be made upon receipt of this Report Form and upon receipt in hard copy of a completed External Examiner Claim Form for Reimbursement of Fees and Expenses and expenses receipts. This Report Form and the associated Claim Form may be downloaded at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/ifs/exex/rep/index.html>

External Examiner Reports are made available in full to students. For this reason, and in accordance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, individual staff and students should not be named within the Report.

Please note that External Examiner reports are circulated widely in order that any necessary action can be taken. A copy of the final report of an External Examiner will also be passed to their successor.

Cardiff University prefers External Examiners to complete their Report Forms electronically and to submit them by email as indicated above. If, for any reason an External Examiner prefers to provide their report in hard copy it should be sent to *Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.*

**PAYMENT OF FEES CANNOT BE AUTHORISED UNTIL RECEIPT OF THIS COMPLETED FORM  
AND THE ASSOCIATED CLAIM FORM**

Name of External Examiner: Lorens Holm

Institution: University of Dundee

Programme of study and subject(s) examined: Architecture: M.Arch. Dissertations

Academic Year/Session to which this report applies: 2014/2015

## **Freedom of Information Act**

The University is a public authority and therefore subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The University may therefore be required to publish the whole or parts of any reports and correspondence submitted by its External Examiners. The University also reserves the right to choose to publish the whole or parts of any reports submitted by its External Examiners.

## SECTION A

### 1.1 Programme Structure

*Comment upon the appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification (if available).*

The guides for the Dissertation Module and the Research Methods Module are succinctly and clearly written; the aims, objectives, content, and assessment standards are reflected in the students' dissertations. The dissertation is clearly a well tutored piece of work.

The structure and content of the dissertation program, including the teaching support and the allotted contact and student study hours, seems measured and realistic, and meets the learning outcomes set out in the module guide and the ARB criteria.

This seems to be an extremely well-taught, and well-conceived dissertation program. I was impressed by staff commitment and engagement with the students' work.

### 1.2 Comparability of Standards

*Comment upon the comparability of the standards of the programme with similar programmes nationally and the performance of the students in relation to their peers on similar programmes. In those subject areas where a subject benchmark statement is available, have the students demonstrated achievement of the appropriate benchmark standard?*

The Dissertation module compares favourably with similar modules at other schools of architecture of which I am aware, in terms of:

The content, length, and quality of the written work;

The benchmark standards for assessment and the parity of grading;

The structure and organisation of the module.

### 1.3 The Examination Process

*Comment upon the appropriateness of the assessment methods and balance between them (i.e. unseen written papers, essays/dissertations, orals, etc), the marking scheme, procedure for the classification of the award and the overall conduct and fairness of the examination and assessment processes.*

This is the only Dissertation of which I am aware that includes a *viva*. This is thus a unique course. The *viva* is a terrific learning experience for the students. The assessment process by first reader and supervisor, which precedes the *viva*, is also a thorough and dignified process.

## SECTION A (Continued)

### 1.4 How did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Have any or all of the recommendations made by you or your predecessor last year been actioned?

Similar.

### 1.5 If this is your first year as External Examiner please comment upon whether the school induction activities (if applicable), External Examiner Handbook and other documentation provided helped you to fulfil your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner. Are there any ways in which the process could be improved?

n/a

### 1.6 Please give examples, if appropriate, of good or noteworthy practice in the following areas which you wish to draw to the wider attention of the University:

- (i) alignment of learning outcomes with assessment tasks;
- (ii) methods of enhancing consistency of marking;
- (iii) explicitness of information relating to assessment;
- (iv) other practice in the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme.

(i) The Dissertations conform to a template (aims & objectives, questions, literature review, and the like) which are aligned with learning outcomes, and make assessment easy. I suspect that the rigorous adherence to this template helps the weaker students; I wonder if it may in some cases be restrictive for the better students and limit risk-taking.

(ii) Every dissertation is assessed 4 times: the tutor and reader assess it internally; it is then read – and then *vivaed* – by the external examiner.

(iii) As above, the module guide is explicit as to what is expected of a dissertation, how it is assessed, the learning outcomes, and the learning tasks.

(iv) overall, excellent.

**1.7 If this is your final year as External Examiner please provide an overview of your period of office which may be passed on to your successor.**

n/a

## SECTION B

**Please respond to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Please make appropriate comments if your answers are ‘No’.**

Programme/Course Information		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the programme/course contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	X		
<b>2.2 Comments</b>				
Examination Question Papers		Yes	No	N/A
2.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			
2.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions satisfactory?			
2.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
2.6	Were you afforded access to a sample of in-course assessments?			
<b>2.7 Comments</b>				
Marking Examination Scripts		Yes	No	N/A
2.8	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	X		
2.9	Were the methods of assessment well balanced and fair? Did they reflect the programme’s objectives?	X		
2.10	Were examination/assessment procedures and the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?	X		
2.11	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	X		
2.12	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates’ work contributing to the final assessment?	X		
2.13	Were satisfactory arrangements made for you to conduct any necessary <i>viva voce</i> examinations?	X		

**2.14 Comments**

Each examiner assessed 10-15 dissertations, which is approximately ¼ of the class each, which is a sufficient sample to ensure that each examiner saw a representative sample of dissertation types, topics, and grades.

Note: There was discussion in the exam board about the merits of submitting the dissertations digitally for examination. There are practical benefits having to do with eliminating printing and mailing costs of hard copy dissertations. I am of the opinion, however, that the hard copy is an essential aspect of the artefactual nature of the dissertation, and that it is the hard copy that should be assessed. The dissertation is a carefully designed object with production values – an appropriate expectation for a design school – and this tends to be lost in the digital file, especially if, the examiner prints a draft reading copy, over which the student has no control. I would strongly urge the School to continue to treat the hard copy document as the assessed output.

**SECTION B (Continued)**

<b>Coursework/Dissertations/Projects</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
2.15	Was the choice and assessment of coursework/dissertations/projects satisfactory?	X		
2.16	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	X		

**2.17 Comments**

<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
2.18	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
2.19	Was the assessment of such work satisfactory?			

**2.20 Comments**

<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
2.21	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	X		
2.22	Was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?	X		
2.23	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the programme?			X
2.24	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(s) of Study and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	X		

**Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)**

2.25	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board (i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees)?		X	
2.26	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			X
2.27	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			X

**2.28 Comments**

Signed:  Date: 13 04 2015/ 22 06 15

Please return this report by email to: [ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk)

Your fee and expenses claim form, and any reports which cannot be emailed, should be sent to:  
 Mr. Clive Brown, Registry Officer, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE.