



EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Guidance notes are available to support the completion of this Report via the Cardiff University Intranet [here](#) and from ExternalExaminers@cardiff.ac.uk.

	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Pieter de Wilde		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Plymouth University, Devon, UK		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MSc Environmental Design of Buildings (EDB) <i>MSc Environmental Design of Buildings</i>		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2016-2017	Date of Report:	12 June 2017

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board (the **taught stage** Examining Board in the case of **postgraduate Master's programmes**).

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

This is an existing Masters that is offered through both an on-site as well as a distance-learning mode. It shares a range of core modules with other Master offerings in the school: Sustainable Megabuildings (MEGA) and Theory and Practice of Sustainable Design (TPSD). Beyond this students undertake a number of dedicated modules that are unique to EDB. Numbers on the EDB courses appear to be healthy, with 13 students attending the courses in Cardiff, with another 12 using the distance learning mode. The structure of EDB puts extra emphasis on underpinning scientific knowledge (20 credit module) and design (40 credit module) which is appropriate for the programme. All other modules are 10 credits only.

When meeting the students, they appeared satisfied with the programme structure; they expressed deep appreciation for the two weeks of intensive induction they receive at the start; this is particularly useful for overseas students who have to settle in with a new University culture.

An issue discussed with staff is the starting point for the dissertation project; this is challenging given the relative short duration of the course, where an early start on the dissertation competes in the calendar with settling students into their new programme. However, I am confident that the staff is handling this well and will find a good starting point after some iterations.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

The academic standards for EDB are high and fully comparable with similar courses within the UK. Looking at the material, it is obvious that the academic staff have to cope with a wide range of prior learning, with students that have an international background and that may come from either architecture or engineering degrees; however the course is structured in such a way that each of these categories of students will get some benefits from their background as well as challenges to allow them to develop themselves.

I did review a wide range of materials across all modules; given the relatively small number of students the sample was selected at random, looking at about half of the work rather than just the typical low, middle and top marks. Overall the students get significant feedback on their submissions. Many modules include a formative submission, which allows them to learn and improve their work for the summative submission.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

Overall marks provided were clearly based on a transparent assessment process, with good feedback to the students and signposting of where additional marks could have been earned. The marking is consistent amongst similar modules.

There was a clear track record of double marking on the 20 and 40 credit modules. Moderation was less evident on the other modules, however I understand that this is also in place. It may be worthwhile to create an explicit track record of such moderation for future reference.

4. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

I am newly appointed as External Examiner to this course; however I was in the position to discuss course development in depth with the External Examiner for MEGA and TPSD. Overall the MSc offer at Cardiff is a stable course that has been in place for several years, with minor tweaks being made year-on-year to optimize learning experience and delivery.

5. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided, visits to School, programme handbooks and supporting information)

The material provided to prepare for the role of External Examiners was good, with ample reference material and instructions. The visit to the school was organized well, with the opportunity to meet both staff and students. As new External Examiner it was helpful to work together with an established Examiner, which allowed me to ensure continuity in the assessment process.

6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

The distance learning element of the EDB course seems to be doing extremely well. This is noteworthy as many distance learning efforts have been tried by other Universities but do not come to fruition. It seems this offer caters for an increasingly busy building design/engineering practice, where people working in industry find it hard to take time out to do additional learning. At the same time, the Cardiff offer seems well tested and supported by a dedicated member of staff who knows in detail what is required.

A small suggestion for future years is to provide a large screen in order to digitally display/review posters as developed by the students; on a regular laptop screen these are hard to appreciate in full detail.

7. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

(Not applicable)

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?			N/A
Sampling of Work				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining Board Meeting				

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
Examination of Master's Dissertations (if applicable)				
8.23	Did you receive a sufficient number of Dissertations to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?			N/A
8.24	Was the sample in accordance with the University's sampling guidelines (guidelines provided below)?			N/A
8.25	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the Internal Examiners?			N/A
8.26	Were you able to attend the Master's Degree (Dissertation) Stage Examining Board?			N/A
8.27	If so, was the Examining Board conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures?			N/A
8.28	Were the schemes for marking and classification correctly applied?			N/A
8.29	Were the standards of the awards recommended appropriate?			N/A
8.30	<p>Comments on the Examination of Master's Dissertations. <i>Please provide any comments you may wish to make on the issues raised above.</i></p> <p>(As new Examiner, I have not received any MSc Dissertations for review yet)</p>			

Please return this Report, **in a Microsoft Word format**, by email to:
externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk

Your fee and expenses claim form and receipts, should be sent electronically to the above email address or in hard copy to:

External Examiners, Registry, Cardiff University, McKenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0DE