

Academic & Student Support Services  
Academic Registrar  
Simon Wright LLB  
*Gwasanaethau Academaidd a Chefnogi Myfyrwyr*  
*Cofrestrydd Academaidd*  
*Simon Wright LLB*



**Sent by email to [rylatt@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:rylatt@dmu.ac.uk)**

**07 December 2015**

Dear Professor Rylatt,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2014 – 2015**

I am writing further to the receipt of your External Examiner's Report for the MSc in Environmental Design of Buildings.

Your Report has been considered by the School in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

**Issue(s) Highlighted:**

1. Your report of student dissatisfaction with the outcomes of group assignments and related suggestions;
2. Your indication that students had also highlighted problems with the physical learning environment.

**The following response has been provided on behalf of the School:**

1. The programme team will be reviewing and revising the process of controlling and monitoring individual contributions to group work. It has been agreed with the academic team that the same process will apply to all modules that include group assignments, to ensure consistency and avoid confusion.
2. Students raised complaints regarding the physical learning environment, particularly with regards the pool lecture venues, at several occasions during the academic year; most of these were about temperature – for several weeks in winter there appeared to be a fault in the heating provision in one theatre which meant very cold conditions during lectures for several modules.

This may have sensitised them to be more critical of other problems. The teaching staff brought the problem to the attention of the School's Facilities Manager who liaised with the University Estates team to rectify the situation,

Cardiff University  
McKenzie House  
30-36 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 ODE  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

*Prifysgol Caerdydd*  
*Tŷ McKenzie*  
*30-36 Heol Casnewydd*  
*Caerdydd CF24 ODE*  
Tel Ffôn I +44(0)29 2087 9189  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

but there were delays in improving those conditions. Where possible alternative lecture space was used.

This matter, and other issues relating to lighting, ventilation, and acoustics in lecture venues were raised at a recent Programme Review Committee, and brought to the attention of the School's Director of Education & Students. The team expect that the School and the University will work to ensure that such severe issues do not occur next session, or can be rectified more quickly should they occur.

**The University is pleased to note your positive comments including:**

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process
2. Your particular commendation of efforts to enhance the learning experience "through innovative approaches to coursework design and the provision of extra-curricular activities.

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and we 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 website and will be available to all students and staff.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar