



## EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT FORM

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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Prof R Mark Rylatt		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	De Montfort University		
Programme and / or Subjects Covered by this Report:	MSc Environmental Design of Buildings		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2014/2015	Date of Report:	26/07/2015

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

Programme structure seems generally appropriate for a course at this level, which has quite a quite broad intake. There was some feeling among the students that the specific modules were more interesting and challenging than the core modules but it is not unusual for higher degree courses to be structured in this way and a balance has probably been struck so that students from a range of backgrounds are not disadvantaged. There was also a sense from the students that the contrast in intensity between the first and second semesters was too great but there is no real evidence to support this view. An experiment this year where the deliverable was an excessively long power point presentations should probably also not be repeated, although it did engender a great deal of useful assessment feedback.

### 2. Academic Standards

The course is comparable with other similar courses at Masters' level in the UK, providing appropriate grounding in industry standard approaches and tools applicable in a variety of building design contexts. Students are taught to interpret and apply advanced knowledge systematically in a variety of complex situations and encouraged to develop solutions with some initiative, self-direction, critical evaluation. Few students on the course achieve these aims consistently but standards are maintained through a rigorous assessment process. One module in particular however – where a conference

paper of publishable quality was required - suggested that students could be stretched further with generally very good outcomes.

### **3. The Assessment Process**

Assignment briefs and marking schemes are generally of a very high standard. There is a relatively large number of assessed units, which places considerable demands on the lecturers. In general however they have risen well to this challenge. Two isolated examples of “group feedback” (a generic list of possible reasons for loss of marks for individual assignments), which hopefully will not be repeated, did not undermine a generally high level of performance. Some complaint was noted, as last year, among students concerning informal interim feedback, which was thought not always to be consistent with the final grade but this may simply indicate that students were unable to capitalise on constructive advice. There was also some evidence of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of group assignments. While this is something of an old chestnut suggestions for some more structured form of control and monitoring of individual contributions should perhaps be considered seriously. There were some conspicuously poor performances in some class tests but the reasons for these have been investigated by the course team.

### **4. Year-on-Year Comments**

The course continues to attract mainly students from overseas with varied but rarely intense intellectual ambition. Performance year-on-year is quite consistent but it is perhaps disappointing that few really outstanding students seem to be attracted to the course. This year my meeting with students indicated that there was quite a high level of dissatisfaction with the physical learning environment – this has not been mentioned previously but as the view was that it had an impact on academic performance perhaps it should receive serious attention.

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

### **6. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement**

The course team are to be congratulated on their commitment to enhancing the learning experience through innovative approaches to coursework design and the provision of extra-curricula activities.

### **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)
<b>Programme/Course Information</b>				
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		
<b>Draft Examination Question Papers</b>				
8.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?			N/A
8.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?			
8.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?			
<b>Marking Examination Scripts</b>				
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?			N/A
8.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?			
8.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?			
8.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?			
8.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?			
<b>Coursework and Practical Assessments</b>				
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		
<b>Clinical Examinations (if applicable)</b>				
8.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			
<b>Sampling of Work</b>				
8.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
<b>Examining Board Meeting</b>				

		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		
<b>Joint Examining Board Meeting (if applicable)</b>				
8.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			
8.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			

Please return this Report, preferably in a Microsoft Word format, by email to:

[ExternalExaminers@cf.ac.uk](mailto: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