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Sent by email to [martyn.dade-robertson@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:martyn.dade-robertson@ncl.ac.uk)

**13 January 2020**

Dear Dr Dade-Robertson,

**Re: Institutional Response: External Examiner Annual Report 2018/19**

I am writing further to the receipt of your report for MSc Computational Methods in Architecture.

Your report has been considered by colleagues in the School and is the basis of this Institutional Response on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. The School will also use its contents to help inform their [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process and where appropriate, [Periodic Review](#).

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

1. Your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.
2. The technical rigor of the course is impressive with students attaining high levels in core technical competences related to architectural computing.
3. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme means that the students can engage with fields outside architecture and this was highlighted by the students themselves as a key strength.
4. The availability and access to key staff is also highlighted by the students.
5. Feedback on the project proposals was extensive and detailed and all students mentioned this as an exemplary example of written feedback.
6. Space made available to the students seemed very good, as did access to technical resources



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## Issues highlighted in your report and response provided by the School:

1. **Programme Structure:** *Some student dissatisfaction with the relevance of some of the modules taught outside the School.*

This interdisciplinary programme was created as a collaboration with the School of Computer Science and the School of Engineering. Given the small nature of this programme, it is not economically feasible to create new modules specifically for this programme. Therefore, the programme was restricted to selecting the most appropriate modules from Computer Science and Engineering. Regardless, the skills attained in these modules will help the students, if not in the programme itself, then in their future careers. However, we will continue to monitor the modules' contents and the student feedback to respond accordingly within our resources.

2. **Master's dissertations:** *Uncertainty that dissertations reviewed were all of 70+ standard; it would be good to have a clear statement of the brief for the final project and an indication of the level of tutoring for these projects.*

We will continue to monitor student attainment. The dissertations were assessed by two internal assessors independently and the marks moderated. Given that the dissertation is unique to each student, it is difficult to set a written brief in advance. The dissertation topic, context, methodology, and deliverables are agreed with the dissertation tutor in a series of meetings. The dissertation is a largely independent piece of work carried out over the summer months. We will strive to document this process more explicitly going forward.

The level of tutoring is consistent across our PGT programmes and typically entails 12.5 hours of tuition and 5.5 hours of marking (standard WLM). The marks that students received can be substantiated against assessment criteria that map onto the learning outcomes for the module.

3. **Preparation for the role:** *Provide a Dropbox or similar folder at least a week in advance of visit, including the suggested documents.*

While all material was provided on Learning Central, we appreciate that this is not always easily accessible. We will make sure the material is more easily accessible in the future, but appropriately secure in line with data protection requirements.

We hope that you will find this response satisfactory and 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's [Public Information website](#) and will be available to all students and staff.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Simon Wright  
Academic Registrar