CEBE Innovative Projects in Learning and Teaching

Understanding Student and Staff Perceptions of Feedback in Architecture

Summary Report

A collaborative project between
Queens University, Belfast and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

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by

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1.0 Project Introduction

This report presents the results of a collaborative project between Queens University, Belfast and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, and builds on a dialogue initiated during Session 2009-10 through which course guidance and feedback received by students was identified as an area requiring deeper understanding in order to enhance current practice.

2.0 Project Context

As Ramsden (1992) succinctly stated, the importance of effective feedback mechanisms is pivotal to a quality learning experience. Despite this, Yorke and Longden's Phase 1 Report on the First Year Experience identified student satisfaction with feedback as a generic weakness in UK Higher Education. However, in the field of architecture, in which many educators would consider the learning process to be discursive and feedback-rich, it is perhaps surprising that student perceptions of feedback are poor compared to some other subjects.

In the UK this phenomenon has been underlined by the results of the National Student Survey (NSS), in which the subject has consistently returned low returns in this aspect of the student experience (Roberts, 2010). NSS statistics suggest that more requires to be understood about what students understand about the feedback process(es), and the role that they and their peers play in an effective feedback process.

Roberts and Yoell's (2009) categorisation of student propensities for reflection within the learning process is of interest, particularly as feedback is intended as a process aimed at stimulating and promoting reflective activity through the engagement of the individual. Through feedback, the role of the tutor in the stimulus of reflection is critical. Equally, effective learning relies on the sustained motivation of the student and this, as von Glaserfeld (1989) noted, is strongly dependent on student perceptions of, and confidence in, their ability to learn. In the case of architecture this derives from reflection on work already completed, and the sense that progressively the student is acquiring the artistry associated with the experienced practitioner. Such reflection is based on commentary and

dialogue, with staff and, importantly, peers (Parnell, 2001), this feedback performing a critical role in influencing levels of confidence and motivation.

Questions arise relating to what students, amongst the totality of guidance received, understand to be feedback (Angus, 2003). How do students engage with guidance, and how important is their engagement to effective learning? Equally, questions arise about the guidance that tutors give, including how the learning process is conveyed, the accessibility of language used, and the form that feedback takes at different points in the learning process. Within architecture, there exists a further differential between the learning experience associated with design studio context, and that relating to non-studio course components. The project aimed to investigate these areas, which are of relevance to the breadth of architecture courses across the UK and beyond.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the project were as follows:

- To further understanding of student and staff perceptions of feedback processes in architecture education
- To investigate the existence of perceptual differences between feedback relating to studio-based and non-studio modules / components
- To inform the design of learning activities to enhance the effectiveness of feedback to the learner

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- To survey student understanding of, and attitudes to, feedback, and the values that are attributed to different aspects of the feedback process
- To survey staff regarding feedback methods used, their perceptions of the effectiveness of these, how feedback processes are explained, etc.

4.0 Methodology

Based on the premise that feedback is fundamental to effective learning (Biggs and Tang, 2006), the project sought to analyse the perceptions of students in two universities, with the aim of drawing conclusions that are of generic value to architecture educators, and which are thus transferable between schools. Accordingly, the collaboration between Queen's University, Belfast and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen enabled the adoption of an approach that is mutually informative, whilst facilitating a depth of discourse around a shared methodology and data set.

4.1 Subject Groups

The following subject groups were identified for data collection:

4.1.1 Students

Aligning with the census point for the NSS, the principal focus for the study was Year 3 students in both schools. Students at this level have the benefit of having already accrued significant experience of university education generally and architecture education specifically, providing greater perspective when reflecting on their experiences. However, in order to obtain the views of students from other study levels, the second round of the questionnaire and focus group process involved others from across the courses.

4.1.2 Staff

Groups of staff representing the breadth of the curriculum will also be included within the research, enabling the juxtaposition of student and staff perceptions of the same learning process. The study group included full-time staff involved in both lectures and design studio modules, and part-time staff involved in design studio tutoring.

4.2 Data Gathering

Data collection was achieved through a combination of methods incorporating questionnaires and recorded focus group discussions, all of which took place during academic session 2010-11. The questionnaires were jointly designed by the collaborating institutions, addressed both qualitative and quantitative

information. These were issued to both schools according to a common schedule to ensure that the recipients were at a similar stage in the cycle of the academic year. Two rounds of questionnaires were used, the first of which was issued towards the end of Semester 1 teaching, and the second at the end of Semester 2. Students and staff received questionnaires, each of which explored similar territory.

Focus Groups were held in both schools to explore issues arising from the questionnaire results. These were conducted using staff from the other institution, and were recorded with the full consent of participants.

4.3 Anonymity

All Questionnaire responses and Focus Group contributions were made anonymously. Questionnaire returns were submitted to a neutral location that prevented the respondent being identified. Similarly, staff and student Focus Groups were conducted by academics in each other's school, and recordings transcribed by the host school thus avoiding the possibility of comments being attributed to individuals. This process preserved anonymity and hence the openness of dialogue.

5.0 Key Findings

Overall, the data gathered from the students of the two schools revealed a high level of consistency and commonality in terms of the principle issues raised. This was true of both studio and 'non-studio' learning[1]. On the other hand, staff views were more diverse, reflecting different experiences, perspectives, and attitudes to learning.

The principal findings are discussed in the following section under 4 headings, each of which are discussed in turn:

- Clarity of Documentation of Learning Process
- Guidance

[1] Although the categorisation of non-studio based subjects as one is rudimentary, it was clear from data collected and from focus group discussions that neither students nor staff considered it problematic.

- Nature and Quality of Feedback
- Reflection

5.1 Clarity of Documentation of Learning Process

Developing Understanding of the Learning Process

The first round of questionnaires and focus groups placed significant emphasis on the nature of the learning process, and the students' understanding of it. This was initially explored with respect to the documentation issued to students by each school.

5.1.1 Generic Institutional Documentation

As an exploration of existing practice as means of informing future enhancement, the study established what documentary frameworks are produced by the institutions involved for articulating to students each respective course and its' particular learning process. Perhaps unsurprisingly with respect to reference points such as the QAA Codes of Practice and other exemplars of good practice within the sector, these frameworks were found to be similar in nature, each comprising key documents such as Programme Specifications, Module Descriptors, and Module Guides, although in the case of the latter these were found to differ in nature[2]. Appendix A details the core course materials issued by each school.

Both institutions issue material that describes each Module, explains the structure of content delivery, identifies the form of assessment, and when it takes place. This material did not significantly differ between schools. Equally, both schools had recently been involved in an active, ongoing process of improving documentation, not simply as an issue of compliance with sector standards, but out of a desire to better articulate the learning process to students and other stakeholders. The requirement for course-related documentation to address multiple audiences was highlighted by academics, this having impacted on the

[2] RGU issue a 'Teaching Plan' which details the nature of each teaching activity, and the content covered in each. The 'Module Guide' prepared by QUB is more extensive, including information relating to content of the module, module aims, learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

nature of its presentation, such as a degree of standardisation of format and writing style.

Academic staff saw a need to clearly differentiate between the standardisation of templates for information, and the material itself. In the case of the former, advantages were identified in terms of presenting a consistent and uniform format that becomes familiar to students, but it was agreed that it is essential that content is contextualised to the subject, course, and chosen delivery method of the respective school. Moreover, staff observed that it is essential to leave room for the individual tutor to assert him or herself through curriculum delivery, as personality was recognised as being a vital component of an effective and engaging learning process and the tutor's ownership of it. Failure to acknowledge this was considered to introduce risk of reducing documentation that should be beneficial to learning, to a bureaucratic and banal process of limited value.

In both schools efforts were being made to improve student understanding of the learning process through more explicit documentation that outlined requirements, described processes, and sought to set clearer expectations. With reference to the objectives of the study, particular attention was being paid to the processes of assessment and feedback, these being areas in which the subject of architecture has faired less well in the National Student Survey. However, despite the presence of such materials, which the students confirmed they had been introduced to and could readily access via VLEs, it was found that it was referenced or accessed by them with variable frequency[3]. Processes of reiteration were considered vital by students in order to develop a keen understanding of processes, outputs and expectations, and it was evident from student responses that discussion of these documents by staff was considered important in giving them real meaning and value. Due to their typically greater credit weighting, and the frequent incorporation of multiple briefs, studio modules were seen to inherently contain a degree of reiteration and dialogue that was seldom replicated in non-studio modules. Thus, from analysis of student perceptions, expectations and processes tended to be less well understood in these modules. However, in the case of the latter some students recognised

[3] RGU adopts Moodle, an open source platform, as its VLE. QUB uses QSIS as an online environment.

learning methods as being closer to their prior experience in secondary education, and hence regarded them with greater familiarity.

By way of an overview of learning, both academic teams felt that they lacked a clear articulation of learning, in terms of how modules link together, progression between levels, and the tutor-student relationship. Course handbooks had not proven to be effective as students were not motivated to read extensive documentation. However, there was broad agreement that whilst articulation of the learning process requires development, there is no single method that may be adopted universally.

5.1.2 Subject Specific Considerations

Students from both schools sought clarity in their understanding of the learning being undertaken, although the nature of what constitutes clarity is clearly dependent on the individual. For example, a sense of the overall objectives sufficed for some, whilst others sought specific information prescribing tasks to perform and processes to undertake. Nevertheless a number of consistencies of response emerged that suggested where effort may be effectively directed in enhancing practices.

Students tended to regard Module Descriptors as important documents for confirming assessment criteria, modes and formats, and timing. This tendency to focus on scheduling and performance-based information was supported by evidence in focus groups that students typically accessed these documents at the beginning and end of the semester, or on completion of a submission. Some students perceived generic statements, such as outcomes, to be unhelpful when viewed in isolation, and sought elaboration that brought specificity and meaning. Indeed, instances where specific detail or contextualisation was not provided was construed by some as unwillingness or laziness on the part of staff. This in itself suggests a student expectation of an explicit process. It was highly apparent that clarity fundamentally revolved around assessment, whether through understanding of criteria, expected outputs, or judgments of quality and performance relative to the stated criteria. It was equally evident from student responses that it is the use of exemplars of work that gives the most tangible

meaning to course documentation, and it was suggested that exemplars could cover a range of standards in order to make grading processes more intelligible. Currently, the use of exemplars top outline learning outcomes and assessment criteria was found not to be commonly employed in either school.

Documentation considered key included assessment matrices issued to students as an addendum to assignments and project briefs, and including information on assessment criteria and their relative weightings. There was some staff resistance to the concept of assessment matrices and weightings in one school, on the basis that the holistic view taken of a project by a member of staff, often differs from the grading arrived at when criteria are disaggregated. Arguably, however, this could be seen as a question of the precision with which assessment criteria are articulated, and ensuring that assessment practice is in accordance with the chosen criteria. However, in an integrated subject, the argument for holism in assessment has legitimacy, although the students clearly view some degree of dissection of an overall grade as being more informative.

It was perceived by students that tutor interpretations of learning objectives can vary, and that whilst differing staff opinion forms part of the studio learning process (as shall be discussed later), students expect uniformity and consistency of message relating to outcomes, expectations and outputs. Hence whilst there is a need for a clear, explicit correlation between learning outcomes and submission requirements, issues relating to course governance also arose.

It was in considering fundamental course information that perceptual differences between ‘studio’ and ‘non-studio’ first emerged as learning processes can differ markedly. Considered overall, there appear to be key aspects of the learning process that students still struggle to understand, especially with respect to design studio. From the data gathered, the fundamental weakness was student understanding of the underpinning pedagogy based on critique, the rationale for its use, and the implications of its use in terms of practices and behaviours. This area is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

5.1.3 Learning in a Critical Framework

When viewed overall, responses from students (and to a degree from tutors) suggested that there is a need for greater understanding of the pedagogical basis for learning in architecture. This was supported evidentially by responses relating to design studio in particular, where perceptions conformed to well documented phenomena such as difficulties in handling power relationships, reconciling multiple perspectives, and understanding assessment. It would appear that although the basis for teaching and learning practice has become better understood by academics in recent years through the enhancement agenda, it is still not being effectively conveyed to students. It was the view of a number of respondents, including students, that students are best prepared for differences in opinion through an understanding of the importance of critique, and why it is important to the learning process. This view was supported in the second round of focus groups by the students' increased acceptance of this teaching method as they progressed through the course ad could successfully identify and navigate critique.

The issue manifested itself most clearly through student perceptions of tutor input. Much of the commentary suggested that many students, driven by the desire to achieve high grades, undertake their work tactically by seeking to satisfy tutors. Such behaviour was also found to be influenced by the specific interpretation that individual tutors were perceived to apply to, say, a project in terms of where they placed emphasis or what they deemed particularly important. Although it did emerge from some respondents, few contributions suggested that the objective for students to adopt their own individual position, was widely understood. Alternatively, it may be argued that that there was a reasonable understanding of this, but that student confidence levels made it hard for many to make the necessary leap. This was evidenced by the comments made in discussion of peer learning, where it was noted that some find it hard to counter the opinion or position of a tutor (which is why peer learning is valued as an alternative, but not equivalent, practice).

In setting out the learning process, the importance of describing and explaining the expectation of or desire for a changing power relationship between tutor and

student was noted. Within the context of critical pedagogy, the relationship between the two is one that is in a state of constant flux, the aim broadly being that as the student gains ability and confidence, the relationship becomes more equitable, fuelling richer discourse. Of course for this to happen, the start of the process must be carefully considered so as not to establish rigid expectations, assumptions, or patterns of behaviour that persist over the duration of study.

Discussions with academics referred to educational practises being adopted in secondary education, where prescriptive, highly structured methods were seen to militate against the notion of pedagogies based on critique that indeterminacy engenders. The view was strongly held amongst tutors that the shift in cultures between secondary and tertiary educational systems needs to be explicitly accommodated, and that this requires clear articulation to the student. For example, intrinsic to the notion of operating within a critical framework is the recognition that students may challenge the boundaries of the exercise as set. With respect to core documentation, there was a feeling amongst academics that this might be facilitated by a reiteration of learning outcomes in a manner that encouraged more individual interpretations of learning.

The critical nature of learning in architectural design introduces the notions of dialogue, subjectivity, and disagreement, all of which were found to play a significant role in what students termed 'inconsistency'. Inconsistency was characterised as a function of what the students regarded as the inherent subjectivity of architectural design, and was seen to arise particularly when the preferences of tutors contradicted one another. In its most basic guise, this was represented as an argument between 'I like' and 'I don't like', raising the question as to the degree to which the personal preference of a tutor is of significance to learning. From responses there is evidence that the introduction of personal taste encourages student behaviours that seek to satisfy these preferences. This is a form of dependency, which could be seen to propagate a level of superficiality, and presents inherent difficulties, especially if understanding of the basis for personal taste is not well understood[4]. However, perhaps inevitably, the

[4] Students' identification of preference as inconsistency rather than discursive learning is unsurprising as it is not fully or formally included in the course documentation for either school as a method of learning.

argument becomes more subtle. Instances were cited of tutor differences being represented through individual interests in, say, structural systems. These persuasions, interests, or leanings borne from expertise were seen to influence the nature and direction of the conversation, and indeed introduce unique complexions to the review process. These phenomena were described as presenting greater difficulty in the early years, with a greater understanding having developed by third year. Notably, the phrase ‘pinch of salt’ recurred in student descriptions of their response to feedback / guidance received, which could be interpreted as an increasing independence and confidence of the student in their own knowledge, skill and judgement, or alternatively a sense that the value or impact of the feedback diminishes in the more senior years. Irrespective of the above, there was a recognition from some students that inconsistency is an important ingredient in the process of design, and hence of learning. The notion of inconsistency is returned to in Section 5.3.

5.1.4 Course Structure and Content

Both schools share a fundamental course structure consisting of studio-based design modules supported by a number of more didactic modules in which knowledge is developed across a number of theoretical and technological areas. Consistent with this structure, and the respective delivery methods employed, the students drew clear distinctions between studio and non-studio modules in terms of current practice and the expectation of learners. The relationship between the course components in service of the idea of architecture as an integrated subject appeared to be understood. However, the student data revealed a number of issues that indicate that the relationship is perhaps more complex in practice than the ambition of integration suggests. Key differences identified by students related to methods of delivery, which in turn fostered a different relationship between student and tutor, assessment and feedback practices, and student methods of working.

Whilst broadly complementing studio activity, the idea of non-studio content being regarded as discreet was echoed in commentary from academics. Indeed the point was made by academics that while architecture is fundamentally an integrative subject, a desire to achieve complete integration of the curriculum can

constitute a ‘dumbing down’ if it demands that ideas and theories must be applied through project work. Additionally, the view was expressed that there is a place for delivery methods that counter the intensity of design studio, and allow the student to gain an insight into, say, theory in a more passive way. Indeed it was considered that there are instances where it may not be appropriate to demand of the student that they immediately translate knowledge gained didactically into the context of their studio-based activity, and that there are advantages in shifting the field of vision. In such conditions, where knowledge is simply delivered, there may be a much more limited role for feedback. However, in this scenario the students’ understanding of that difference becomes critical to the effectiveness of the whole learning experience, raising the question as to how effectively difference is expressed within documentation intended to guide and develop pedagogic understanding.

Student perceptions of the importance of course content or modules with the course were found to be governed by their views of their relevance to the world of professional practice, as indicated above[5]. The fact that studio dominates in terms of time was found to emphasise the importance of design, as does the understanding that other subjects fundamentally exist to support, inform and enrich studio-based design work. Perceptions of studio were claimed not to come from tutorial guidance, but from the relative scale of endeavour, and its manifest relationship with professional practice. These student responses suggest a need to clarify and reiterate the rationale for the adopted curriculum structure and content.

5.1.5 Creative Latitude and Judgement

There is a deliberate widespread tendency within the subject to couch Learning Outcomes in a manner that defines expectations appropriate to study level, but which is sufficiently broad to avoid constraining scope through prescription, and afford a degree of latitude in the selection of the learning vehicle (e.g. project). However, as has been discussed already, students seek information beyond such generic statements, highlighting the importance of clearly placing specific projects or exercises within the context of the learning outcome.

[5] It is noted that the students’ relative experience of practice was not explored in the research.

5.1.6 Peer Interaction as an Active Process

The essence of design studio is founded on notions of the collective and creative exchange between individuals. As a result, there is evidence that studio plays an instrumental role in forming enduring social bonds (Nicol and Pilling, 2000).

The study found that students view peer discussion in studio to be overwhelmingly positive as it introduces different opinions and view points, provides oportunity to share ideas and thoughts, as well as practice discussing architecture. The latter builds confidence. Peer interaction was also noted as a means by which they can benchmark themselves against one another. In contrast to perceptions of the tutorial, peer feedback was portrayed as being more active and discursive, with a tendency to move ideas forward more definitely. Students expressed a greater ease in discussing ideas with peers, this being described as introducing a different dynamic in which ideas are discussed, tested, and decisions made. By contrast the formal tutorial was not regarded as a point where decision-making takes place. Rather it was portrayed as a more passive, reflective process after which action would take place. Thus there appears to be a complementary between these passive and active processes.

The primary benefit of peer conversation and feedback was seen to be the fact that students in a cohort are all at an equivalent academic level. This, and the fact that they know one another and have formed social bonds, means that conversation can be direct without causing offence or hurt. This alludes to the removal of the power relationship that exists within a tutor-student context. But it also is clear that the relationship with peers is seen to be trusting, which in turn permits a directness that is sometimes seen to be moderated by the tutor. Equally, some thought that peer feedback was more pragmatic in content as opposed to tutor feedback which was conveyed as sometimes being conceptual, ‘over-intellectualised’, or idealistic. On the other hand, tutor feedback was regarded as being more trustworthy and reliable in terms of content, due to the experience and qualifications of those involved. Indeed some students considered the unreliability inherent in peer review to be problematic, leading to a desire for feedback from peers that are demonstrably successful.

The spirit of peer group working was carried over to non-studio modules by some, and was said to be useful in preparing for examinations by sharing the revision load by sharing of notes, etc. In the context on non-studio activity, whilst fewer responses were received, the primary benefit was seen to be that of mutual support in progressing the task at hand, and defining a consensus about what is required to be done. Both these facets correlate with the observation that less guidance is typically provided in these areas, leaving the student more to their own devices. However, the view was expressed from a number of students that non-studio modules are more individual and involve processes that require less interaction.

In terms of external peer reference, one of the surveyed student groups referred to the motivational importance of referring to the work of peers from other institutions. Additionally this activity serves as a means of developing aspirations and benchmarking, but constitutes a different form of peer reference than with cohort counterparts.

5.2 Guidance

5.2.1 Existing Practice

The study investigated perceptions of the guidance currently given by each school. The issue of guidance may be discussed at two fundamental levels; guidance on the overall learning process, including course structure, curriculum content, and progression, and guidance in terms of feedback received throughout the learning process. This section deals with the first, while the subsequent section addresses feedback practices.

In both schools there were significant differences between studio and non-studio components with respect to perceptions of the quality of guidance received. Studio feedback was quantified as equating to approx.15-20 minutes per student[6] per week. By contrast, non-studio feedback was generally described as being

[6] Staff in both schools confirmed studio tutorial time as equating to 30 minutes per student per week, although on occasion this time is broken down into shorter sessions.

simply summative, being typically provided post-assessment and at a point where it cannot be acted on within the context of the module learning. As a result, whilst studio guidance was generally rated highly, that relating to non-studio modules was only viewed as being satisfactory. These results highlight the need for explicit articulation of the different learning methods adopted, and expectations relating to each.

The dominant nature of design studio also appeared to be a contributory factor in the perception that more guidance is given in studio at the start of a module or project via information provided, than in non-studio modules. Indeed, in the case of 'non-studio' modules, a significant percentage of students did not consider that information providing guidance had been issued. Although there were detailed differences in perception between schools, the overall pattern was replicated in both. Furthermore, there was a strong perception that studio staff often don't know what demands are placed on students in terms of other modules, and that there can be a lack of co-ordination across the academic team. The difference in dynamic between the tutor and student in studio and non-studio modules arguably offers explanation for the high percentages who do not recall information having been provided. Qualitative commentary suggests that students do make comparisons between different course components, and conversely that practice in one raises expectations in another. The intensity of the studio experience, through which salient issues may be readily and continually reinforced, appears to raise expectations relating to non-studio modules, and this was found to be particularly evident with respect to feedback (see Section 5.3).

5.2.2 Enhancing Learning Through Clarity

Section 5.1 introduced the question of whether more explicit information is required with respect to the over-arching learning process. Academic participants felt that although the crit process is understood by students as an integral part of the learning experience there is a need for tutors to be more explicit about its basis in pedagogy, i.e. what critique is there to do, where it comes from, and why it is appropriate within a creative process. The perspectives of staff raised the question as to whether guidance ought to include discussion about the role of the

tutor, and the duality within this that embraces the supportive, facilitative function whilst also being an assessor (although not the sole assessor). It was evident from student comments that there can be a perceived disjunction between the feedback received, say, through reviews, and the final grade awarded. From this it is evident that the process of assessment leading to grading lacks clarity and transparency. An argument for increasing the transparency of this process, and making it explicit that grades are typically consensually derived and often the product of intense debates, is that it reveals the importance of the academic team, and hence reduces the importance of any individual's singular view[7].

Academic participants made the point that, due to its more determinate content, the expectations of non-studio modules are much more easily described, whereas studio involves numerous factors as well as being unpredictable in terms of what a project outcome might become. However, this last point arguably confuses the project with the learning – it is a vehicle for a learning programme rather than itself being the learning programme.

Staff deemed guidance to be essential as the students are required to learn the principle of practice from the outset, weaning them off the culture to which they are accustomed whereby the teacher tells them everything they need to know. Issues relating to student responsibility for learning, and the need to practice skills, demands constant reiteration, this point being stressed by both study groups. Additionally, there was a sense from tutors that students absorbed discussion of objectives and outcomes more in relation to a specific studio project than a module. In the case of modules with inputs from multiple staff, the need for co-ordination to ensure consistency of interpretation of requirements is vital in order to avoid confusion amongst the student body.

5.2.3 The Developing Practitioner

Making explicit the existence of a broader field of vision than simply the assessment criteria being applied at a particular point in the learning process,

[7] See also footnote no. 4.

opens up opportunities to widen discussion. Moreover it can shift the emphasis from the project to the developing individual as an architect.

It was felt important by academics that, in the context of stimulating ambition, it is important for students to understand that there may be qualities in work that lie beyond the particular assessment criteria, and that such qualities have a value to others, and within their portfolio. The assessment criteria represent a 'window' or framework through which the work is viewed, but there exist other frameworks that represent different perspectives, which are nevertheless relevant. An example was given relating to design studio where students were required to make a statement of design intent, the purpose of this being two-fold. Firstly, it encourages the student to adopt a personal position that then becomes the framework within which dialogue takes place. Secondly, it enables the student to understand one of the primary criteria of assessment through their own contribution to the process. The involvement of the student in this way was considered essential to furthering discussion about the future trajectory of work, where the students wishes to take a project, and ultimately to gaining an insight into what students take from the critique given.

5.3 Feedback

The first round of the questionnaire process evidenced students view that 'feedback' could be considered in three separate strands: firstly as simply receiving information on current progress within the course, secondly as receiving opinion on work without an explicit link to performance and thirdly as receiving criticism or constructive criticism. Responses were relatively equal amongst these three categories. However when asked what they considered to be the purpose of feedback a significant majority stated that improvement or progression was the defining factor. This finding suggests that while the language used in communicating feedback and guidance aims may be differently interpreted by students the underlying impetus was well understood and recognised as contributing to the learning process.

The same set of questions to staff suggested a similar focus on student development through situating themselves within a progression of skill learning

and development in conceptual thinking. However when asked what the purpose of feedback was staff responses differed from the students focus on progression with rather more emphasis on the possibility that feedback can enable reflection. Like the student responses there were a small number of answers that suggested feedback as a means to understand previously received marks.

Both staff and students were asked to comment on what characterises 'good' feedback. Student responses consistently cited clarity and fairness or balance as key to a successful feedback process. (The issue of balance is returned to later). Students also suggested that timely feedback or feedback received with some regularity was an important aspect of their learning. Staff also referred to fairness or constructive criticism as an important facet of feedback.

The following sections explore some of the findings from both the questionnaire process and the workshops conducted at the two schools.

5.3.1 The Nature and Quality of Feedback in Studio and Non-Studio Modules

As discussed above, a primary consideration in the formation of this research was the degree to which the perception of what constitutes feedback within the learning process in architectural education influences the integration and usefulness of that feedback for students. The initial questionnaires released in both schools asked students to identify when in the semester they receive feedback, whether it was successful in aiding their progression and which aspects of the feedback progress they particularly valued. It was proposed that student and staff perception of what constitutes feedback may be further illuminated by their identifying when in the schedule they believed it occurred.

In both schools students cited the weekly tutorial as the main contact point in studio between themselves and the staff. The mode of tutorial identified was that of the one-to-one desk review rather than group tutorials or the more formal review process.

A significant number of students also cited the review process as an important vehicle for guidance although these were far outweighed by responses on tutorial contact time. Responses for the same question related to non-studio modules produced markedly different results. Two factors seemed to structure this differentiation across both workshop groups. The first was the manner and content of specific feedback sessions; the second was the particular points in the curriculum schedule at which the feedback was delivered.

The findings of the research undertaken for this study pointed quite clearly to a perception by both students and teachers of a difference in the function and quality of feedback between studio and non-studio modules. Remarks on this topic during the workshops focus largely on the discursive, problem solving nature of studio work in contrast to the task completion characteristics of lecture based learning. Students' answers on guidance in non-studio modules divided into three subsets: opportunities to ask questions during lectures, opportunities to seek out guidance during office hours, or the suggestion that there were little no avenue for receiving guidance available to them during a project rather than afterwards. There was also resistance to wholly student-led contact time necessitated by the 'office hours' framework.

In design studio tutorials the manner and content of feedback tends to be 'one-to-one' or review session, verbal feedback supported by the subsequent issuing of a written document recording the feedback. In contrast non-studio modules tended towards written feedback supported by non compulsory 'office hours' tutor contact. In this first demarcation between feedback in studio and non-studio modules responses indicated that the studio methodology of person-to-person engagement required a greater investment of staff and students time resulting in a more closely collaborative learning process.

However the questionnaire results suggested that students tend to value the private tutorial above the public review as a key learning method. Workshop groups in both schools suggested that this may be a result of the skill required to respond to a review in order to reap the most benefits. Students stated that the discursive, somewhat combative set up of formal reviews became more possible

to navigate as they progressed through the school and began to find their own 'voice' as an architect.

Staff referred more often to the formal, interim and final review process as a learning tool and queried the students' ability to defend their work, stating that students needed to acquire 'robustness'. However both staff and students identified the possibility of inconsistent feedback delivered in both review and tutorial scenarios as a negative aspect of the learning method (see also Section 5.1.1). The relative merits of the discursive tutorial and review process did not negate its primacy to the studio process and the degree to which students identified with it as key to their own development. Across two rounds of workshops and questionnaires and in both schools there was no reference to inconsistency or disparity between methods in feedback delivered for non-studio modules.

In one workshop a staff member suggested that the differences in perception stem from students' struggle with the definition of feedback as opposed to guidance. They felt that the subjective and opinion based environment of the studio setting resulted in guidance that students were free to accept or dismiss as appropriate. Conversely non-studio modules focused documentation very specifically on illuminating why a particular mark had been achieved and therefore could more clearly be defined as feedback. A further exploration of this point concluded that the current move within architectural education to mark on the basis of process as opposed to product can introduce a further degree of uncertainty into the marking structure in studio.

However staff agreed that guidance and feedback is not always a linear process with students developing week-on-week based on constructive input from tutors. The links between regularity of guidance and student progression is explored further in the next section. Staff suggested that if feedback is to be a linear process it must be student led as they mature throughout the entirety of the course.

5.3.2 The Quantity and Regularity of Feedback and Guidance

While the nature or format of feedback between studio and non-studio modules differed between schools they also shared a differentiation between the timing and the regularity with which students received that feedback. Respondents in both schools stated that the volume of feedback received for studio modules far surpassed that of non-studio.

The students communicated that the relative quantity and regularity of guidance from non-studio modules suggested that lecture based course work was an 'add-on' or that the studio modules were in fact the 'core' of the education offered. In fact in both schools the curriculum is weighted to provide a 50/50 spilt between studio and non-studio modules in terms of assessment criteria and learning outcomes. Students also felt that the non-studio modules did not offer an individualised approach to feedback.

This was engendered both by the format of the feedback documentation (as discussed above the feedback in non-studio modules is for the most part written as opposed to verbal) and, as already stated, by the timing of the feedback. Non-studio modules tended to provide feedback on the completion and assessment of a task allowing the student no opportunity to reflect, review and improve on the work whilst preparing it.

As a result some students suggested that this way of providing guidance wasn't 'real' feedback. However in the workshop sessions when asked whether regular contact time with non-studio staff would be desirable students resisted the formalisation of such guidance over and above the current system of access during 'office hours'. Some responses indicated that as studio was perceived to be the primary driver of the course more regular guidance sessions for non-studio modules would be an undesirable use of their time week on week.

This focus on the consistency and availability of contact with staff in studio modules is a feature of many university degrees that rely on problem solving as a core teaching method. The design studio learning structure relies heavily on a student's personal, explorative process and is set out within a problem-based

methodology similar to medical higher learning structures (Roberts, 2004). This teaching methodology inevitably leads to greater interaction and amounts of feedback from participating staff. Results from both the questionnaires and workshop sessions indicated that staff and students equated the amount and frequency of feedback with an implicit value judgement as to the value of studio and non-studio modules. That is to say that due to the considerably lesser amount of feedback and contact time in non-studio modules students (and in some cases staff) viewed them as peripheral to the core module of studio despite the formal equal weighting within the course structure.

Staff responses indicated that the regularity of student to staff contact would ideally be student-led as the cohort mature through the school. Staff consistently identified student led feedback as preferably to frameworks formulated and implemented by staff and also suggested that this appealed to students' own perception of the value of feedback.

A dichotomy between staff and student perception arose around the subject of allotted contact time between students and tutor. Students felt that the weekly tutorials largely worked well although it could be somewhat improved by a 'booking in' system whereby it is possible to agree a time to be seen by a tutor on a specific day. They were particularly focused on their own ability to seek out guidance from tutors as and when they deemed it appropriate. From the second round of workshops where the student group consisted of representatives of students from all stages of the schools rather than third years exclusively it became apparent that this aspect was more important to the students more advanced in their progress through the school. Early stage students tended to align more traditionally with the studio timetable.

However on the subject of tutor/ student contact, staff responses differed greatly in attitude from those of the students. Staff suggested that students were aware of their tutor time 'entitlements' as fee paying patrons and demanded contact time accordingly.

Staff conveyed a perception of the students' time management as based around their allotted time for feedback as a function of the staff to studio ratio in relation to the entirety of the studio staffed time. In other words students tend to divide the amount of staff by the number of students and insist that they get an equal share of that calculation. However, there was little if any reference to these issues in student responses suggesting that this perception by staff may be a result of current budget concerns and staffing pressures experienced in the work place.

It is possible that a later observation by staff, that they tend to not allow students to control the amount of feedback they receive, may align somewhat with the comments explored in the last paragraph. Staff felt that due to time constraints and the attitude of students they were required to manage the instances and the duration of contact time in order to engage with each student in a fair manner. It was recognised that each student's working method differed and that the weekly tutorial contact time may not be the optimum approach for all individuals. However it was also stated that the size of the cohort in conjunction with the number of hours available for contact time limited tutors' ability to tailor the occasions of feedback for each student. A clear objection was the likelihood of a greater number of students seeking feedback and for longer duration towards the end of studio projects than at the beginning. No similar concerns were voiced regarding the regularity or quantity of individual contact time for non-studio modules.

5.3.3 Relative Quantity and Quality of Feedback Sought

Students in both schools did not place a greater emphasis on written feedback over and above verbal or other methods of feedback and guidance. As the 'fairness' of the review and marking process was discussed it emerged that students viewed written feedback as one avenue by which they could counteract the more subjective aspects of the architectural education process. However groups in both schools stated that they rarely retained written feedback in studio beyond the life of a particular project. Several reasons were offered for this. Students felt that written feedback in the form of notes taken in the review were mainly to record the proceedings for them so that they could adapt or develop the

project further post review. Several students suggested that as the review is relatively confrontational, nerves and external conditions conspired to reduce their ability to retain the aural information during the review.

Students were clear that the notes, having been implemented in the project, could be disposed of after the fact. Students also suggested that tutors in some cases were reluctant to record opinions expressed during the review and would use written feedback as a means to simply record what work was presented. It was felt by the students that this was a less useful feedback mechanism as the written evidence tended to serve as a reminder to staff when marking rather, than to students in developing the project.

The secondary nature with which written feedback in the studio context is viewed by students is supported by the widespread consensus in workshops that this documentation was not for the most part retained by students. They viewed the written feedback as a supporting aspect of a larger guidance and feedback framework and were prepared to abandon what they had received on completion of the task. This was predominantly because it was considered a formality although attitudes to the retention of feedback in studio and non-studio modules differed.

In fact the students questioned seemed to also differentiate between the relative long term language of such feedback. As studio work responded specifically to a given brief, commentary and guidance received necessarily referred to those conditions and therefore was less clearly applicable to long term development. Conversely written responses on non-studio coursework tended to cite general research methods employed, writing style, ability to construct an argument and breadth of knowledge allowing students to more clearly identity long term educational goals.

Staff however perceived that students sought and placed particular emphasis on the formalisation of feedback in the written form. This attitude by staff could perhaps be interpreted as a result of the increased focus in recent years, supported by the validation process by professional bodies, of updating and

standardising course and school documentation. Staff therefore place undue emphasis on the written document as a relatively new and formal method for recording the verbal, discussion based guidance received in studio. One aspect of this position was the time invested in producing written feedback as a proportion of staff input to studio and non-studio modules and the expectation that, as a result of this invested effort by staff, documentation would then be retained and made use of over a more extended period of time.

5.3.4 Perceptions of Positive and Negative Feedback

Students in both schools acknowledged that there were inconsistencies in the content and method in which feedback was delivered. However both participating schools tended towards a view of this as beneficial rather than undesirable. Almost all the students participating in the workshops resisted the idea of a structured review process that would produce both negative and positive comments. Staff also recognised that feedback in studio, less so in non-studio, was inconsistent although this was attributed to the nature of the subject rather than the particular staff involved in reviews.

Students were, in some cases, aware that they were not required to concur with tutor input on specific design proposals and that they might choose to disregard feedback. However, there was dichotomy between the junior students (first and second year) and those of third, fourth and fifth as the senior members of the workshops stated that they felt that differing opinions helped them to move towards their own position in terms of design. However students across all groups also stated that this development of one's own position on architecture was impaired somewhat by the impact of staff perception on the marking process. Students felt that in some cases they were unable to digress from tutor instruction as to do so would endanger their final grade. Tutors felt that students receiving a wide breadth of opinion were supported in creating their own position on a design proposal. In this sense the student and staff attitudes closely align.

One key divergence between staff and students was the value placed on directional guidance- or feedback that suggests specific avenues for development to a student. The issue of 'directional' feedback arose when

students were asked whether they would like to have explicitly positive and negative aspects to the review process. In both schools of architecture students resisted this on the basis that the review process would become a standardised and less dynamic method for learning.

Students were interested in understanding the reviewers' point of view as a means to progress the design work and found reviews that didn't facilitate this less than satisfactory. In one workshop a student stated that 'giving direction' based on the work presented should be the main focus of the review. When asked if they agreed with that participants unanimously agreed with the statement. Conversely staff resisted the idea of directional guidance as overly prescriptive for the student's personal development of a design proposal.

5.4 Reflection

5.4.1 Perceptions of the Meaning of Reflection

Staff and students shared remarkably similar views on what constituted reflection. Both groups cited a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of one's own working processes. Both groups suggested that an important factor in meaningful reflection was time. Some students saw reflection as a method of assessing where they rated themselves relative to other students' work. Indeed a large proportion of students responding to the questionnaires stated that their relative ability was only made obvious through an appraisal of fellow students' work, an observation that aligns somewhat with the positive responses received on peer based guidance as discussed earlier.

Staff in both schools suggested that reflection could be both the conscious plotting of how a project progressed from brief to complete proposal, and a much longer exercise of engaging with knowledge provided over time at a moment that is meaningful to one's own development. Successive staff cited their own experience of connecting with a particular piece of learning long after the completion of a project and in some cases long after the completion of their formal architectural education. Critically, reflection was seen as a skill rather than a process.

5.4.2 Space for Reflection and the Focus of the Educational Process

Some staff felt that as students moved through the school the reflection process became more useful and complex but less easily assessed as an explicit part of the coursework. This was echoed in some of the responses received from students.

Although staff had examples of explicit learning outcomes based on a reflective process (the completion of a Personal Development Plan for example) there was a general perception that after the very preliminary stages of learning, the process of reflection would not be enhanced by formalising it as coursework. The first and most fully explored aspect of this within the workshops was the degree to which reflection is an individual and private process. Staff linked this to the use of sketch books by student and practicing architects.

Although there was an agreement that the need and methods for reflection were worth teaching to first years staff suggested that the documentation required to evidence reflection would be sufficiently confidential as you progress as to make it unworkable. Indeed staff suggested that enforcing such assessment would standardise the reflective output amongst students and ultimately reduce its value. In particular responses indicated that reflective texts currently completed were largely undertaken to fulfil a requirement of the course and were rarely the authentic product of applied knowledge.

Staff also suggested that although reflection was an integral aspect of the learning process, a focus in assessment on the quality and coherence of the final project as opposed to the working process does not support reflection as a teaching aim.

5.4.3 Peer Feedback in Studio and Non-Studio Modules

Both students and staff were asked to outline how much peer review was utilised in the learning process and what benefits this teaching/ learning method. There was a strong argument from staff in both schools that peer review is inextricably supported by the promotion of a studio culture amongst students. Staff cited their

own experience of education and the degree to which interaction with their own peers enhanced an exploration of history, theory and their understanding of architecture.

Two staff workshops identified the embedded learning environment engendered by the studio setting. While agreeing that tutor style reviews were useful to the learning process staff suggested that the proximity of other students work, of varying abilities, allows students to gage the relative quality of their own work. This implicit learning process or ‘raising the standard’ was linked to both a competitive interest between students within a cohort and the creation of opportunities whereby students could share drawing, model-making and other communication skills.

When asked about peer review, both staff and students across the two participating schools, began with a discussion of studio. When asked if their observations on peer review in studio also applied to non-studio modules, the students stated that it largely did not. One aspect of this differentiation was the location and method of working on studio and non-studio modules. Even when working on individual projects a large proportion of studio work was carried out in a group environment whereas non-studio module coursework such as essays were written in the library or at home away from the general cohort. As a result students made a distinction between their peers attitude to each others’ non-studio work citing a more competitive atmosphere in the completion of tasks. Secondly students stated that while in studio peers may provide a critical analysis of ongoing work, in non-studio modules the peer interaction was more in the form of a support base. This was attributed by students to the lack of a proper discussion forum in non-studio modules.

Both groups strongly resisted the suggestion of a formalisation of the peer review process. This was partly due to a perception that peer review learning was to some extent more useful to ‘stronger’, more vocal students. Less able students were seen as reticent in contributing to formal peer review events, particularly when those events surrounded individual design proposals rather than group work.

Students felt that peer review was an important but not integral part of the working process in studio although this was view was lessened for non-studio modules. Participants also felt that while most students were open to feedback from class mates they were more focused on, and placed greater value on feedback from staff. Students in both schools stated that they would be more inclined to accept and implement advice from a studio tutor than a peer. Staff questioned generally resisted the idea of formal peer review settings as a key method in promoting this learning method to students although groups in both schools could cite instances where this method had been recently introduced. One objection to agreed and possibly assessed peer review was that the studio environment would suffer as a result of removing that type of interaction from an informal environment as discussed in the next paragraph. When questioned about collaborative staff/ student feedback staff also cited budgets and staffing in respect of the efficacious use of guest reviewers' time and whether it was worth ceding those sessions to hear what is often informal, peer feedback from students.

5.4.4 Comparing Peer and Tutor Feedback

One attribute cited by students as important in harnessing peer feedback was the distinction between tutor led tutorials as a somewhat passive process and peer feedback as a dynamic or active session (see Section 5.1.6). This focus on active peer review can be viewed as a function of two distinct factors. The first is the more hierarchical relationship between tutor and student as knowledge holder and knowledge seeker. The second is a far more mundane requirement for tutors to limit the time they give to specific students thereby curtailing the opportunity for a far reaching and dynamic tutorial session.

Students stated that peer interaction allowed for a more in depth discussion on the relative merits of a design proposal without a focus on a particular outcome. There was also the suggestion that this style of tutorial was better suited to a discussion of working process than the form of a final architectural design. As students are often striving to find a process of design that enhances their output this is a particularly strong point in favour of peer review.

6.0 Summary of Salient Issues

6.1 Articulating the Learning Process

- Staff and students saw benefit in clearer communication of the respective courses, for which documentation played a central role in conveying processes, expectations and outcomes.
- However, the importance of contextualising content was considered essential in order to make it meaningful and useful. As an example, the relevance of course components or content is not always clear to students, this tending to devalue those components.
- The broader learning context requires to be reiterated on a regular basis in order for students to understand issues of overall scope, relevance, etc.
- Within the overall framework of the course, it is important that individual tutors are given the latitude, or 'space' to overlay their own personality and approach to specific learning elements (e.g. modules, projects, etc).

6.2 Guidance

- Students derive confidence through understanding of the overall learning 'path', and how different modules and exercises support it. Indeed it is a fundamental pre-requisite of learner independence.
- Similarly, there was evidence supporting clearer explanation of the pedagogic basis of studio-based learning, including the notion, relevance, and value of critique.
- The consistency of the message to students with respect to outcomes, outputs, and so on is important irrespective of differing tutor approaches, positions, or interpretations in relation to the curriculum.

6.3 Assessment

- The clarity of assessment processes, criteria, and expected outcomes is a high priority for students.
- Consideration might be usefully given to the articulation of learning outcomes that encourage more individualised interpretations of learning.

6.4 Feedback

- Students generally understood the objective and purpose of feedback, viewing clarity, fairness, and a balance between positivity and negativity as characteristics of good feedback.
- Feedback is valued when it offers guidance on how to progress. Written feedback from studio-based work was not considered to do this effectively.
- There was a perceived difference between studio and non-studio modules in the function and quality of feedback. This was seen as a function of the problem-solving nature of design studio versus the task-completion focus typical of non-studio modules.
- Written feedback tended not to be retained or referred back to in any significant manner. Written studio feedback was seen to record the point of development reached, rather than identify ways forward. Consequently, it was viewed more as an aide-memoire for staff grading.
- Students perceive studio to be more feedback-rich than non-studio, which can develop a sense of the latter being of lesser importance.
- Feedback in non-studio modules was generally summative only and considered less valuable, being too late to act on, and often less personalised.
- However, studio feedback was seen as being highly specific to a project, whereas non-studio feedback referred more explicitly to broader skills development, such as the ability to construct an argument in written work. Due to this characteristic non-studio feedback was seen to be more worthy of retention.
- It was considered by students that insufficient time is designated for reflection.

7.0 Publication of detailed results

The project generated a considerable volume of research data covering a number of dimensions of assessment and feedback practice within the specific context of architecture education. It is the authors' intention to publish two journal articles examining the areas of feedback design and peer review and assessment in greater depth. At least one of these will be submitted to CEBE's 'Transactions' journal in due course.

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Appendix A: Core Course Documentation Issued to Students

Queen's University, Belfast

- Course Handbook
- Programme Specification
- Module Guides
- PDPs

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

- Detailed Course Descriptor
- Module Descriptors
- Teaching Plans for each Module
- Module Performance Descriptors

Appendix B:
Sample Documentation from Queens University, Belfast

Queen's University Belfast

MODULE GUIDE

Module Code and Title: Design and Communication III, ARC 3011

Academic Session 2011/2012

Module Convenor: Neasa Hourigan

Contact Details: Ext.4169 n.hourigan@qub.ac.uk

Module Staff: Ruth Morrow, Neasa Hourigan, Steve Larkin, Cian Deegan, Conor Sreenan, Douglas Carson

Introduction to Module:

This module aims to provide students with an understanding of architecture and urban design as a mode of research and practice that shapes environments and responds to existing communities. It will introduce some of the practical and theoretical issues involved in architectural research and related built environment studies. The module will also facilitate, through design work engagement with theoretical issues of building technology and sustainable design. As part of the module students are required to work in small groups to research and analyze specific aspects of Belfast urban fabric. The studio offers students the opportunity to deal with design problems from the scale of the city to the individual building and thereby gain a better understanding of the resultant pressures and interactions between them.

In preparation for the second semester there will be a focus on the development of student skills. The module includes a field trip to Rome for approximately a week with preparatory and onsite work that includes preliminary research, keeping sketch book log, ability to compare and contrast relevant typologies, information collection and strategic design proposals.

Content:

This module consists of three separate but complimentary elements:

1. Urban Design- Group research and design work
2. Individual design proposals based on urban design elements
3. Study tour- research and onsite project

The module seeks to optimise students' design and research skills in preparation for their final semester and focuses on the following areas:

- Conceptual urban and architectural design
- Development of proposals and personal working process
- Skills and task completion
- Final presentations of urban design and architectural proposals

Module Aims

- To optimise understanding of urban design strategies and the relationship between architectural design and evolution of city environments.
- To foster research methods in traditional and non traditional modes
- To optimise and enhance practical skills in the process of architectural design
- To optimise ability to create a coherent and comprehensive architectural and urban design proposal

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module students will have:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Knowledge of the social, economic and phenomenological forces that are driving the design and morphology of the built environment.
- Understanding of relevant theories of urban design and methodologies with emphasis on understanding the diversity and relative nature of theory, the complexity of urban development and the specific requirements of the assigned site.
- Knowledge of comparative analysis and relevant research techniques

Subject Specific Skills

- Conceptualization, experimentation, decision making and implementation of design solutions
- Ability to demonstrate cultural and architectural experience and initial design skills; experience of research and information gathering; ability to sketch from life and from imagination; preparation of reports; ability to summarize research topics.
- The ability to apply strategies for sustainable design, structural detailing, materials choice and environmental management systems across the program of a building project

Cognitive Skills

- On-going critical analysis of personal and group design processes and integration of feedback on progress in studio environment
- Interpretation and analysis; sketching and recording; research; verbal presentations to large groups of people.
- A critical understanding and ability to implement architectural and urban design briefs
- An ability to critically assess materials specification and building technology as a cultural, economic and environmental set of skills

Transferable Skills

- Demonstrate an ability to present work orally and graphically
- Demonstrate an ability to utilize specific research methods and assess reference material as appropriate
- Managing self learning and communication of learning outcomes
- Team working and collaborative problem solving

Teaching and Learning Methods

Design and Communication is taught using a wide range of teaching methods and learning styles including desk work, collaborative discussion, group work, problem solving, best practice and precedent review and the formation and presentation of architectural proposals.

Feedback is provided during the semester through tutor interaction (desk crits), interim reviews and final reviews. Students may also be invited to interview before the Christmas break to discuss performance and interim marks.

Assessment

Your work will be reviewed consistently throughout the module, with final marks allocated at the end of the year. This module is undertaken through continual assessment and as such there are no formal examinations associated with it. All assessment is based on design work, produced during the module such as drawings, sketch models, presentation models and presentations.

Criteria of Assessment

Project	Criteria	%
Site and Social Survey	Accuracy and relevance of source material, presentation and graphic work	**15**
DataBank:	Relevance of information provided and coherence in presentation	**3**
Study Tour:	Sketch book- quality and quantity of sketches.	**10**
	Alternative mapping: relevance of work and participation in group presentation	
Street Strategy	Participation and contribution to group work, problem solving, clarity and appropriateness of final proposal, presentation of final proposal	**20**
Making 1:1	Conceptual thinking, design process, contribution to group work	**12**
Row Housing	Conceptual thinking, design process and the synthesis of themes from the semester into final design proposal, final presentation	**40**

Additional Information

This module contributes to evidence that you have completed the RIBA/ARB Part 1 criteria for validation

Reading List

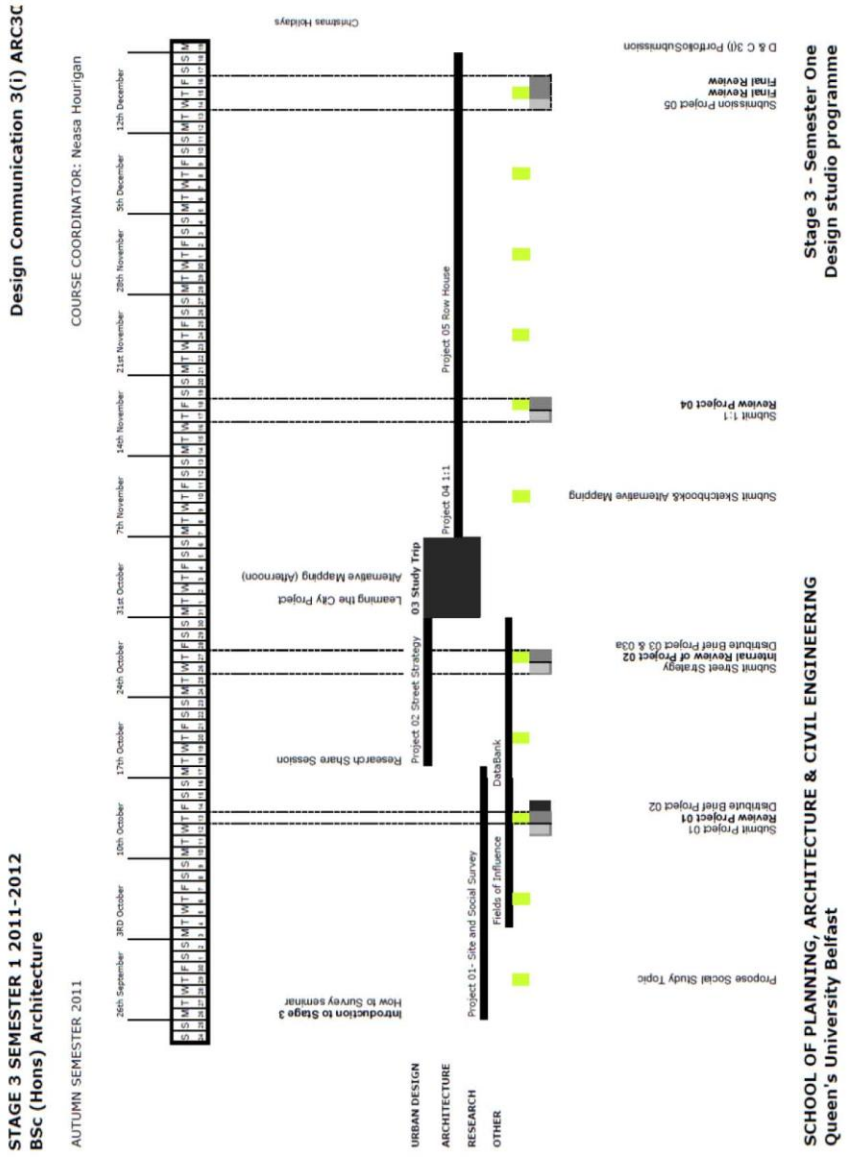
The Image of the City- Kevin Lynch

City Planning According to Artistic Principles- Camillo Sitte

The Death and Life of Great American Cities- Jane Jacobs

Collage City- Colin Rowe

Outline Timetable



QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST
SCHOOL OF PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIL ENGINEERING
MODULE GUIDE
Module Code and Title: Integrative Design ARC3015
Academic Session 2010/2011
Module Convenor: Miriam Delaney
Contact Details: m.delaney@qub.ac.uk
Module Staff: Miriam Delaney, Carl Southern, and Menghao Qin
Introduction to Module:

This module aims to provide students with an understanding of the technical and professional skills that the architect brings to bear on a design project.

Module Aims

- To understand the professional, economic, technical and environmental context of architecture.
- To understand project planning and related documentation, statutory legislation, regulatory controls and financial considerations in the design, planning and construction of built works.
- To understand the technical issues of light, heating, sound, and their application in the design process.
- To allow the students to engage directly with professional skills relevant to the stage of their education.

Content:
The module consists of two elements;
1- Professional Skills (overseen by: Carl Southern)

The content of this element of the module includes –
The professional context of a small to medium scale architectural project and the role of members of the integrated design team and how finance and legislation frames development. The role and duties of an architect as a team leader/member and client's professional representative during development of the brief, professional liaison and contract administration. Principles examined will include the management of expectations and leadership within business and the legal duty to embrace equality of opportunity, accessibility and regulatory measures to ensure that health and safety are integral to the building design.
Applied Professional skills includes-
Principles and application of group organisation and management. Time and budget management, file structures, coordination and organisation of publications and exhibitions. Personal (and group) marketing and promotion, career planning and management of time and workload. Working with community groups, city groups and other stakeholders in design processes.

2- Technology and Environment (overseen by- Menghao Qin)

The content of this element of the module includes –
How building science relates to a medium scale building: acoustics of the building envelope, noise control engineering, environmental and building noise controls (SRI), planning and building control. Building services: selection spatial requirements and integration and coordination of service systems with the structure and fabric of architecture, the fully controlled environment, technology required for environmental control of heat loss and heat gain, building energy simulation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On completion of this module students will have developed:

- An understanding of the contemporary nature of the architectural profession, its context within the construction industry and the various roles architects can play in society.
- An understanding of the methods of investigation and methods employed to optimise added value benefits during preparation of the client's brief for a design project.
- An adequate knowledge of the construction industry, organizations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating development plans within a controlled context.
- Knowledge of how finance relates to building projects and methods of cost management.
- Knowledge of building regulations and how they impact on the design and configuration of architecture.
- An appropriate awareness, knowledge and understanding of the professional role, relationships and responsibilities of the architect in a changing business environment. An understanding of how architectural projects rely on teamwork and how to manage relationships within teams to maximize effectiveness and opportunity.
- An ability to organize and implement strategies for group management, career planning, personal promotion and media engagement.
- An awareness of the significance of a broad range of forms of architectural dissemination and an understanding of the issues involved.

- An understanding of how the principles of ventilation and comfort impacts on medium scale buildings.
- An understanding of principles of acoustics and noise control in buildings.
- Knowledge of using experimental methods, analysis and simulation of building science and environmental control of heat and light in buildings.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Integrative Design is taught through lectures, workshops and group projects. The timetable is ordered to allow crossover between formal lectures and the studio design projects. Studio based workshops will allow students to apply the theoretical principles to design based work. 'Fields of Influence' group projects engage students directly with professional skills relevant to their stage of career.

Assessment
Compulsory: 75% attendance at lectures, seminars and tutorials
Overall Module Assessment: Coursework: 65%
Paper: 35% (120mins)
Broken down as follows:

	Paper	**Coursework**	**Subdivided into:**
Professional Skills:	**-**	**50%**	**20% Applied Professional Skills**
			30% Professional Skills workshops
Tech. and Environment	**35%**	**15%**	

Criteria of Assessment:
Professional Skills:
Marks will be assigned for completion of coursework. The details and assessment criteria of the coursework will be outlined in full in associated briefing documents, which will be issued at the outset of the projects to all students.

Applied Professional Skills (formerly Fields of Influence)-
Marks will be assigned for the completion of the tasks outlined in the 'Fields of Influence' brief. The details and assessment criteria of the project will be outlined in full in an associated briefing document, which will be issued at the outset of the project to all students.

Additional Information: This module contributes to evidence that you have completed the RIBA/ARB Part 1 criteria for validation
Reading List:
Essential Reading- Professional Practice (CS)

Architect's Handbook of Practice Management: 7th Edition, Sarah Lupton
RIBA Outline Plan of Work 2007 (UPDATED): Including Corrigenda Issued January 2009
Construction Companion to Briefing, David Chappell and David Hyams

Recommended Reading- Professional Practice (CS):

Architecture Essentials: Architects Job Book, Plan of Work and Green Guide to the Architects Job Book
Architect's Pocket Book, Charlotte Baden-Powell, Architectural Press April 2008 Third Edition
Building Regulations in Brief, Ray Tricker, Butterworth-Heinemann, August 2007

Essential Reading – Technology and Environment (MQ)

Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings, Ninth Edition, Benjaman Stein and John S. Reynolds, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. USA, ISBN 0-471-15696-5
Heating, Cooling, Lighting Design methods for Architects, Second edition, Norbert Lechner, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. USA, ISBN 0-471-24143
Acoustics and Noise Control, B J Smith, Peters, Owen, Pearson Professional Education.
Acoustics Noise and Buildings, Parkin and Humphreys. (Mainly Reference or on-line used copies).

ARC3011 Architectural Design 3 (i) **Feedback Sheet**
Project 07 Row Housing **15/16.12.2011**

	Exceptional 90-100%	**Outstanding** 80-89%	**Excellent** 70-79%	**Very Good** 69-69%	**Good** 50-59%	**Adequate** 44-49%	**Passable** 40-44%	**Marginal Fail** 35-39%	**Weak Fail** 25-34%	**Poor Fail** 15-24%	**Nothing of Merit** 0-15%
Appropriateness and ambition of urban analysis and conceptual intent (40%)											
Architectural Quality of Final proposal (30%)											
Quality and ambition of visual and oral presentation (30%)											

Student Name/Group:_____Reviewers:_____

Notes:

In preparation for Sem 2 we suggest you work on the following areas:

- ☐ drawing skills/ model making skills
- ☐ verbal / visual presentation skills
- ☐ conceptual intent / framework
- ☐ response to context
- ☐ use of precedents in design development
- ☐ understanding/ application of technology and materials
- ☐ developing spatially rich proposals
- ☐ time-management

Sample Documentation from Robert Gordon University

	Module Title **Architectural Design Studio 5** ***Keywords*** Architectural Design, Cultural Context, Construction, Presentation, Existing buildings, Sustainability, Technology, Professional.	Reference AC3001 SCQF Level SCQF 9 SCQF Points 30 ECTS Points 15 Created May 2002 Approved July 2002 Amended August 2008 Revision No. 3

Prerequisites for Module

AC2004 Architectural Design Studio 4 or equivalent.

Corequisite Modules

None.

Precluded Modules

None.

Aims of Module

To enable students to develop professional skills in sustainable architectural design and communication in relation to existing buildings.

Learning Outcomes for Module

On completion of this module, students are expected to be able to:

1. Analyse critically the qualities of existing buildings and undertake group/individual research.
2. Develop design solutions in relation to existing buildings demonstrating a clear and consistent architectural intention.
3. Demonstrate integration of culture and context within a design project.
4. Develop the necessary skills to integrate technology and environment within a design project.
5. Communicate design intentions orally and using multi-media techniques as appropriate.

Indicative Module Content

In this module students develop knowledge of design and construction methods in existing buildings; design evaluation techniques are introduced. The module also entails the study of precedent (economic, social, and cultural), the research of building materials and components, human welfare and positive contributions to the environment.

Indicative Student Workload

Contact Hours	Full Time
Assessment	30
Lectures	5
Studio Tutorials	24
Directed Study	
Directed Study	168
Private Study	
Private Study	73

Mode of Delivery

This is a studio-based module with introductory lectures, individual and group tutorials, private study and design work. Students develop work through self-directed learning, and through tutor consultation. Students will be expected to present their work to staff and other students at periodic reviews and consult regularly with tutors. Tutors provide feedback in across the board tutorials and at reviews.

Assessment Plan

	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Component 1	1,2,3,4,5

Component 1: Work is assessed formatively at interim reviews and summatively at portfolio review at the end of each semester.

Indicative Bibliography

1. Reading lists are issued with the project brief and vary depending on the type of project selected.

	Module Title **Design Philosophy 5. The City in Context** ***Keywords*** Sustainability, Urban History, Morphology, Urban Theory, Planning, Society	Reference AC3006 SCQF Level SCQF 9 SCQF Points 15 ECTS Points 7.5 Created May 2002 Approved July 2002 Amended August 2008 Revision No. 7

Prerequisites for Module

None.

Corequisite Modules

None.

Precluded Modules

None.

Aims of Module

To provide the student with an understanding of the variety and evolution of urban form and its relationship with the environment through history, and present day mechanisms for planning and developing sustainable cities.

Learning Outcomes for Module

On completion of this module, students are expected to be able to:

1. Identify and describe a range of cities considered key examples of morphological and/or historical city-types, and explain their development in relation to their natural and cultural context.
2. Discuss in written academic format the factors affecting the sustainable development of a particular city.
3. Apply urban and rural theory to contemporary development issues.

Indicative Module Content

The module presents three different perspectives on the subject of urban settlements:
The City in History: an historico-morphological survey of key city types and their main features
The City and Nature; the Sustainable City: an analysis of the relationship between city and nature, and its implications for sustainable development
Urban and Rural Planning: study of legislative and other dimensions at work in current planning processes.

The module emphasizes writing (and drawing and oral presentations to a lesser degree) as tools useful in understanding and describing the subject studied.

Indicative Student Workload

Contact Hours	Full Time
Assessment	5
Lectures	30
Seminars	15
Directed Study	
Directed Study	50
Private Study	
Research	50

Mode of Delivery

Lectures on various aspects of the development, sustainability and planning of the city introduce the broader picture. These are supplemented by tutorials and seminars intended to develop deeper understanding and self-directed learning.

Assessment Plan

	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Component 1	1,2,3
Component 2	1,2,3

Component 1 – Examination will cover general understanding of the content of lecture series

Component 2 – Coursework assesses development and application of knowledge and principles acquired.

Indicative Bibliography

1. Haughton, Graham & Hunter, Colin Sustainable Cities (Regions, Cities & Public Policies) Routledge 2003
2. Le Gates, R.T. and Stout, F. (eds), The City Reader, 2nd Edition, Routledge, 1999
3. Birksted, J. (ed), Relating Landscape to Architecture, 1999, SPON
4. Murdoch, J. and Marsden, T., Reconstituting Rurality, 1996, UCL Press

Additional Notes

Additional bibliography presented in teaching plans and lectures.

RGU/ Scott Sutherland School/ Session 2011-12/ MArch/BSc Hons Architecture/ Stage 3

Module AC3001 Architectural Design Studio 5

Teaching and Assessment Plan **Issue 7 September 2011**

Teaching Week	Date	Project Stages	Output
		Appreciation/ Documentation	ALL CONTRIBUTING TO UNIT EXHIBITION
Week 1	Tue 27/09/2011	DS 5 Introduction/ Site Survey	Completed set of existing orthographic drawings on CAD to display standard
	Thu 29/09/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Completed Group Site Model(s)
			Completed 1:1 individual (each student to contribute)drawings of elements in pencil
Week 2	Mon 3/10/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	/charcoal freehand to scale
	Thu 6/10/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Completed Models explaining existing structure and construction
			Completed Analysis of King's College Masterplan
Week 3	Mon 10/10/2011	***Survey Unit Exhibition Review***	Sketchbook development evidence
		Evolution	
			Completed written and graphic functional Brief based on analysis of existing and new
	Thu 13/10/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	spatial requirements
Week 4	Mon 17/10/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Completed Parti Development
			Completed range of sketch models and drawings (plans and sections) to scale exploring
	Thu 20/10/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	design options
			Evidence of engagement with theoretical themes of cultural significance/ eternal
Week 5	Mon 24/10/2011	Self Directed Design Studio	architectural components/architects responsibility to society
	Thu 27/10/2011	***Project Interim Review 1***	Development of integration of environmental, structural and tectonic planning
	Fri 28/10/2011	***Project Interim Review 1***	Sketchbook development evidence
Week 6	31/10 - 6/11/2011	Self Directed Design Studio	Completion of any outstanding elements from Teaching Week 1-5
			Semester 2 Architecture Trip Planning
		Resolution	
Week 7	Mon 7/11/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Draft CAD set of existing and proposed orthographic drawings at 1:100
	Thu 10/11/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Draft of Axonometric of exploded plans
Week 8	Mon 14/11/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Models exploring various aspects of proposed, including space and structure
	Thu 17/11/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Full draft output illustrating theoretical and philosophical stance taken
Week 9	Mon 21/11/2011	Self Directed Design Studio	Full draft illustration of integration of environmental, structural and tectonic issues
	Wed 23/11/2011	***Project Interim Review 2***	Draft version of Large scale rendered section
	Thu 24/11/2011	***Project Interim Review 2***	Sketchbook development evidence
	Fri 25/11/2011	***Project Interim Review 2***	
			ALL COMPLETED TO DISPLAY STANDARD fully annotated and carefully mounted and
		Documentation	**curated; to also include all previously completed components**
Week 10	Mon 28/11/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	CAD set of existing and proposed orthographic drawings at 1:100
	Thu 1/12/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Axonometric of exploded plans display standard
Week 11	Mon 5/12/2011	Unit Work/ Tutored Days	Edited display and photos of models
	Thu 8/12/2011	Self Directed Design Studio	Documentation illustrating theoretical and philosophical stance taken
Week 12	Wed 14/12/2011	***Final Studio Review***	Documentation illustrating integration of environmental, structural and tectonic issues
	Thu 15/12/2011	***Final Studio Review***	Large rendered section completed and framed
	Fri 16/12/2011	***Final Studio Review***	Complete Sketchbook evidence
	17/12/2011 - 16/01/2012	Self Directed Design Studio	Completion and improvements to any outstanding elements from Teaching Week 1-12
		Assessment	
	Wed 18/01/2012	***Portfolio Presentation***	All as per Final Studio Review but with improvements as suggested
	Thu 19/01/2012	***Portfolio Presentation***	
	Fri 20/01/2012	***Portfolio Presentation***	

Notes
Design Studio Sketchbook is an important tool and forms part of the assessment of this project. It can not be edited in hindsight but will reflect to you and others your thoughts and research throughout the semester. The actual Sketchbook is a bound hardback book with unlined paper A4 min portrait or landscape. The cover and title page will receive the title of the project and your name.
Documentation: This semester focuses on manual exploration, hand drawing and sketching in pencil, models and high quality orthographic drawings. The following are therefore not appropriate nor acceptable at any stage: computer models, renderings 3D animations, perspective views. The use of photos in display should be kept to a minimum as drawing will be your method of giving an edited version of the existing and proposed.

Teaching Plan 2010-2011
AC3006: Design Philosophy 5
Scott Sutherland School of Architecture & Built Environment, Robert Gordon University

RGU week	w/c (dates) (10am-12pm)	Lecture Topic
27	31 Jan 2011	**Lecture 1 [Quazi Zaman]** *Overview of the module – Fundamentals of Urban Design/various theoretical strands of cities and design* *Critical Discussion on Urbanism and the City [Writing of Paul Knox; Douglas Kelbaugh; Krankel McCullough; Michael La and Elizabeth Macdonald on* ***Camillo Sitte, Le Corbusier; Lewis Mumford; Christopher Alexander; Christina Norbe Schulz; Rem Koolhaas; Collin Rowe; Leon Krier; Andres Duany & Elizabeth Platyer-Zyberk; Spiro Kostof; Sas Sassen; Alexander Tzonis; Kenneth Frampton****]* *Lecture will be followed by interactive discussion on group work linking design studio brief.*
28	7 Feb 2011	**Lecture 2 [Quazi Zaman]** *Critical analysis: design and methods of analysis of cities [Writing on design of cities by* ***Kevin Lynch; Edmond Bac Roger Trancik; Gordon Cullen; Congress of New Urbanism; Urban Design Group; CABE; English Partnership*** *Observing, documenting/analysing/presenting site appraisal* *Lecture will be followed by interactive discussion on group work linking design studio brief.*
29	14 Feb 2011	**Lecture 3 [Quazi Zaman/Samuel Penn/Penny Lewis]** *Critical Discussion on:* *An abridged guide to 'Scenes' Interaction with Architectural Space / The Campi of Venice* ***[Alban Janson - Thors Burklin]*** *Lecture will be followed by interactive discussion on group work linking design studio brief.*
30	21 Feb 2011	**Lecture 4 [Quazi Zaman/Penny Lewis/Samuel Penn]** *Critical Discussion on:* ***Jane Jacobs/Jan Gehl/****other strands/modern/postmodern cities* *Lecture will be followed by interactive discussion on group work linking design studio brief.*

Contact: AC3006 Module Coordinator: Dr. Quazi Zaman; q.m.m.zaman@rgu.ac.uk | January 2011

31	28 Feb 2011	**Lecture 5 [Richard Laing/Quazi Zaman]** *Critical Discussion on:* *1) Participatory methods in urban development* *2) Environmental Implications in urban development (Lesson from CareNORTH)* *3) PAN, Scottish Planning Framework; Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen Strategic Planning Framework*
32	07 March 2011	**Submission of Group course work and presentation** **[Quazi Zaman, Penny Lewis, Samuel Penn, Conrad Widermann]**
33	14 March 2011	**Tutorial/Group Discussion 1 [Quazi Zaman/others]** *Commencement of essay writing- choosing topics on theory and practice*
34	21 March 2011	**Tutorial/Group Discussion 2 [Quazi Zaman/others]** *Methods of reading, synthesizing and writing on theories of city & design (for essay writing)*
35	28 March 2011	**Tutorial/Group Discussion 3 [Quazi Zaman/others]** *Individual presentation and group interactions: critical discussion/feedback/debate*
36	04 April 2011	**No Lecture**
37	11 April 2011	**Tutorial/Group Discussion 4 [Quazi Zaman/others]** *Individual presentation and group interactions: critical discussion/feedback/debate* *Submission of Essays*
38	18 April 2011	**Tutorial/Group Discussion 5 [Quazi Zaman/others]** *Feedback on Essays*
39	25 April ~	*Holidays/Reading Week*

Essential Notes to Observe:

- *Please refer to RGU (celcat) timetable for details of your module schedule.*
- *Further description of individual lecture and tutorial/group discussion will be provided in the Campus Moodle.*
- *Lecture presentations will also be available in the Moodle prior to each lecture. Please make use of the lecture presentations before each lectur to contribute effectively to the peer discussions.*
- *Please make sure that you sign the class register sheet provided in every lecture.*
- *Refer to the Module Descriptor (MD) and Module Performance Descriptor (MPD) for details on i) Learning Outcome; ii) Course description; iii) As Matrix and iv) Reading List (detailed reading list will be available in Moodle).*
- *Submission of Course work 1 & 2 should maintain the guidelines provided with each course work descriptor.*
- *For any valid reason to delay or non-submission of your course work, please submit the Extenuating Circumstance Form (can be downloa Moodle).*
- *For any other questions, please contact the module coordinator.*

Contact: AC3006 Module Coordinator: Dr. Quazi Zaman; q.m.m.zaman@rgu.ac.uk | January 2011

RGU/SSS	Session2011-12	AC3004	Design Studio 5	Feedback/Grading Sheet FINAL REVIEW	SELF-ASSESSMENT

Student Name: (print).....

From Sports Pavilion to Art Gallery

	Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NS	M
	Assessment Criteria	EXCELLENT	COMMENDABLE	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	THRESHOLD	UNSATISFACTORY	NON SUBMIT	MITIGATING
		Outstanding Performance	Meritorious Performance	Highly Competent Performance	Competent Performance	Borderline Fail open to compensation	Fail		
Site Context Masterplan	Groupwork	As B = Imaginative	complete, accurate, comprehensive	complete, accurate	mostly accurate, complete graphically clear	mostly accurate, complete and graphically clear	Significant inaccuracies, only partially complete and/or clear		
	Personal Interpretation	significant additional individual and contribution +B +C	Very well presented + C	groupwork well integrated and individually developed resulting in good contextualisation	groupwork mostly considered and incorporated in a satisfactory response to context	some consideration of group analysis resulting in limited but not faulty response to context	Poor or no consideration of groupwork and context		
Design Parameters	Theoretical Exploration and Design Approach (Cultural Significance, Parti etc)	significant additional individual and contribution +B +C	Very well presented + C	clear and relevant with sufficient reference to sources, unit theme and CW brief	limited but relevant	quite limited and/or with faults	not relevant and/or too limited		
	Brief Development	excellent, imaginative + B	well organised record of worthwhile development relative to unit theme and brief	evidence of clear, worthwhile steps, sufficiently related to brief and unit theme	evident and relative to fundamentals of brief and unit theme	patchy/ some confusion, with very limited reference to unit theme and brief	confused/ not evident		
Design	Design Development	Imaginative + B + C	Comprehensive, clear + C	high, answering all important points of brief and responding to context and theoretical approach	sufficient, answering most aspects of brief and context	limited, inconsistent only answering a few aspects of brief and context	confused/ not relative to brief/ missing		
	Design Resolution	Imaginative, original + B	Very high, and cohesive	high, cohesive and believable	mostly well considered	considered but significant gaps	confused		
Presentation	Graphics	Imaginative, immaculate + D	Comprehensive, beautiful + D	clear, consistent, complete + D	succeed in communicating all aspects of design	very limited communication	confused, patchy, not succeeding to be unambiguous		
	Model/Photo	imaginative and making a crucial contribution to explain spaces materials and tectonics	good range making and important contribution to help to explain spaces, materials and tectonics	good range helping to explain the quality of the design	some of reasonable quality which help to explain the design	some of mixed quality starting to help to explain design	some, not substantially contributing to explain design		
	Scetchbook and other written and graphic explanations	Excellent	Commendable	Good	Satisfactory	Threshold	Unsatisfactory		
	Verbal	B+ revealing depth of understanding even beyond wall presentation	C + clearly relating own ideas to presentation and unit theme	clear succinct	helpful to understanding of scheme	some understandable and relevant remark	poor and confusing		

Comments

Date: Tutors Signature: Date: Student Signature:

COPY AND HAND BACK ORIGINAL TO TUTOR