

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

CORE DETAILS:

Name of external examiner	Nigel Cox
External examiner's home institution/professional body/organisation	Bridgwater & Taunton College
Award and Programme(s) (Programme titles required in full) for which examiner is responsible ¹	Professional Garden Design Diploma – Cotswold Gardening School
Place of delivery	Cotswold Gardening School
Units examined	Various

SECTION 1: INFORMATION RECEIVED (to be completed by external examiner)

<i>For the programme(s) covered by this report, the following were made available to me.</i>		
	<i>Please tick in this column as appropriate.</i>	Comment
Coursework briefs or specifications	√	Specification submitted
Coursework marking scheme(s)	X	Within specification
Appropriate and sufficient number of samples of coursework	√	
Exam papers	N/A	
Exam marking scheme(s)	N/A	
Appropriate samples of dissertations or projects	√	
Other materials supplied by School (please specify)	√	Moderation sheets/Assessment schedule

Other materials requested and received by external examiner (please specify)	N/A	
A meeting with students	X	Not possible this year due to COVID-19 lockdown- see comments below
Ease of access to materials	√	Supplied by email

SECTION 2: MAIN BODY OF REPORT (to be completed by the external examiner)

All external examiners are asked to comment under the following four sections

1. From your experience of the assessment process this year, please express your views on the performance of the programme. When commenting on students' performance it is helpful to indicate the academic level to which you refer, and to say whether the comments apply generally or to a minority of the students.

I have now been reviewing this course for a number of years and have seen a consistent development of the contents of the course both in terms of the assignment briefs and the overall administration of the course. The team is well qualified and work well together.

Clearly the course is popular and the number of students has steadily increased.

I am happy at the level of the programme and the consistent standard of the outcomes specified. They are applied consistently across the whole course.

Course content is industry relevant and suitable as preparation for working in the industry

I am impressed by the relevance of the tasks required in the project briefs as they represent up to date and industry focussed situations. Candidates will learn from these how to put design into practice.

In addition the use of digital submission and documentation has improved and is now an excellent method of dealing with assessments and feedback.

Examination of a range of digitally produced work from a range of learners showed a high degree of quality, although variable to the extent of the final grading, generally the high standard was clear throughout and the teaching staff are to be complemented in the level of work being submitted. I have seen this improve each year that I have been external examiner here. Well done to all!

This year has been particularly challenging with the lockdown and it is clear that the students have been able to continue the course effectively using the online and digital facilities provided. The team are to be congratulated on the way they have transitioned the course to enable continuation.

I have agreed that one learner who was a key worker during the crisis should be given concessions to assessment submission- the quality of the work was high and acceptable.

2. Please comment on the assessment process, and in particular:

- appropriateness of methods of assessment in relation to programme/unit aims and outcomes;
- structure and design of the programme or units;
- standards of marking;
- distribution of marks between units;
- fairness, consistency and clarity of the internal marking process;
- administration of the assessment process.

A range of work has been provided to me and from this information the quality was high although I have not seen marking schemes this year. I am happy from previous inspections of the processes followed (extract from last year below)

The marking is consistent and moderation has shown some adjustments. The detailed assessment criteria are set out in the specification and the assessment sheets mirror these criteria.

The programme has been run very efficiently and with full transparency. It was possible for me to drill down into the marking process and to see clearly how decisions had been made and by whom. The feedback to students was comprehensive, and there was evidence of second marking across all modules. The spreadsheets were clear and accurate.

Overall since my last desktop review the process continues to improve and develop and shows consistency across the projects. Moderation is more formalised and supportive

Marking scheme and schemes of work are clear and give good guidance to both students and teaching staff

3. Please comment on any particular strengths, or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes that would be worth drawing to the attention of external audiences, as well as on the lessons which might be drawn from the assessments for:

- the programme curriculum (including aims, outcomes, content);
- learning and teaching;
- resources.

Pleased to see how efficiently the changeover to digital and online work has been handled

4. Any other comments. For example, you may wish to mention:

- your involvement in the process of assessment;
- arrangements for, and conduct of, Assessment Boards;
- students' perceptions of the programme;
- management of inter-institutional arrangements (where a programme is delivered through a collaborative partnership);
- any other matters not covered by these guidelines;
- overview of your term of office (if this is your last report).

1. Next year will be a visit rather than desktop review with interviews of candidates and observations of staff- this to be carried forward due to COVID restrictions this year- **ACTION- to undertake inspection visit in early 2021 please**

I would like to thank the team for their efforts to ensure that I had everything necessary to carry out my job effectively.

SECTION 3: REPORT SUMMARY: (to be completed by external examiner)

The particular strengths, distinctive and/or innovative features, in relation to standards, quality of learning and teaching opportunities and assessment processes are outlined below (please complete if you have raised particular strengths in the main body of the report):

Given the challenges this year the quality of the work is very strong and shows clearly the quality of the course delivery

Happy to confirm that this has been well maintained during this very challenging time

I have not carried out observations on teaching staff this year- **ACTION to carry these out in the next year review- 2021**

--

In my view as an external examiner, the processes for assessment, and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.

YES

Did you receive a satisfactory response to your previous external examiner report?
--

Yes

Signature or email address	NIGEL COX
Date	13.07.2020