Centre for Alternative Technology

Graduate School of the Environment

2017/18 Annual Quality Report

Contents

1. Introduction

CAT gives the highest priority to the continuous enhancement of the quality of our programmes and the educational experience provided for all its students. The continuous monitoring and enhancement of CAT's programmes are core activities that underpin CAT's quality assurance and enhancement processes

The aim of this annual monitoring is to contribute to the maintenance of standards and to the enhancement of learning and teaching through the regular scrutiny of our courses. It is a critical part of CAT's drive to continuously enhance the quality of programmes and the educational experience of all students. It is an annual reflective account of all academic and scholarly activities and is in line with the UK Quality Code: Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.

The purpose of this report is

- To draw together several different source documents into a single action plan that considers all elements of GSE's quality assurance and enhancement work
- To derive an GSE-wide action plan which will include programmes of quality enhancement
- To highlight good practice

The report considers inputs from several different sources. These include:

- The December 2016 QAA Annual Monitoring Report
- UEL REP reports, particularly the annual action plans
- Student feedback
- External examiners' reports
- GSE's Strategic Plan *(only available as draft at the time of writing)*
- GSE's Teaching and Learning Strategy

The report does not consider student learning enhancement as this implementation plan is already GSE-wide. Nor does it include the 2017 quinquennial UEL Collaborative Review as this was not available at the time of writing.

The general method used within this report is

- A reflective, evaluative approach
- To report principally by exception
- To consider all resources affecting the student learning experience

The main outputs are

- A GSE-wide annual Quality Action Plan to address key quality issues
- Good practice identified and promulgated

- A robust, comprehensive system underpinning continual improvement of quality

The main KPIs are:

- Increased student satisfaction as measured by feedback
- Positive feedback from external examiners
- Affirmative audit reviews by UEL
- Successful external reviews

2. December 2016 QAA Annual Monitoring Report

CAT is subject to the QAA review for specific course designation process and, as a result is monitored annually. "The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review." http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Centre%20for%20Alternative%20Technology/Centre-for-Alternative-Technology-SCD-AM-16.pdf

The most recent review took place in December 2016 and the report (the url above) concluded that the School "has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since its Review for Specific Course Designation in December 2013. " The review report also offered several, helpful comments that have helped CAT develop this report. In terms of development in particular it noted that:

- The School is developing its staff development policy

- Applicants for other programmes are not always interviewed, although informal contact is often made either at open days or by telephone

- There is no systemic regular monitoring of progress against the plans recorded in the programme committee minutes during the year

- There is currently no overall School Action Plan

- The minutes of the Academic Council show little discussion of the Quality Code and its use in the development of policies and procedures

3. UEL Review and Enhancement Process for Collaborative Programmes

The Review and Enhancement Process for Collaborative Programmes forms part of the collaborative Review and Enhancement Process (REP) which the University of East London (UEL) undertakes annually with all its partners who offer UEL-validated provision.

It is an opportunity for collaborative programme teams to summarise and reflect on activities taken throughout the previous academic year to enhance the programme and student experience. An important part of the REP review is to look forward into the current academic year, and beyond, to activities that might be undertaken to further enhance the subject area.

Each programme must complete a REP form and thus there are three for CAT covering 2015/16: the MSc SA; the MSc REBE; and the Prof Dip.

The reports cover:

- Progress on the previous year's action plan
- Good and Innovative Practice and Programme Highlights (see section 8)
- Student feedback (see section 4)
- Recruitment, Retention and Progression (section 6)
- Modular Performance
- External Examiner reports (section 5)
- Staff Development
- Action Plan for 2016/2017

MSc Sustainability and Adaptation 2015/16 REP Form

Progress on the Previous Year's Action Plan

Actions from the previous year:	How were they addressed:	Is the issue resolved?
New students have experienced significant delays receiving their student numbers, student cards and student entitlements including Moodle and Athens access from UEL. CAT would like access granted to these services prior to the	A strategic meeting was held between key UEL and CAT staff in November 2015, with actions agreed to seek to address these issues. CAT brought forward the deadline for return of enrolment packs to July. New student details were sent to UEL earlier, which commenced 1st August. UEL provided new students with student numbers and access to student entitlements, including Moodle and UEL's Intranet and online Library and Learning Services, within one week of the start of the programmes in September – which was a vast	Yes, largely, but UEL and CAT need to be attentive to this issue at strategic and administrative levels in the run-up to each enrolment.

start of the first module to assist with student induction.	improvement on previous years. However, this level of change was only effected after involvement from senior managers from CAT and UEL, indicating that there were still hold ups within the sequence of registration activities that had to be overcome.	
Professional accreditations	UEL and CAT to jointly complete the application process for Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) accreditation for the MSc SA programmes. UEL's ACE CIOB 'Part A – Institutional Accreditation' is still pending.	In progress.
Vidcast software	Within 2015-16 vidcast trials were undertaken using Swivl software and loan equipment, with mixed response / success. Video lecture capture commenced in September 2016 using Panopto and new hardware, with the aim of making this routine across MSc SA modules, subject to the necessary resources. Further updates are provided later within sections 4, 5 and 7. CELT are providing CAT on-going support regarding hardware and software most suited to CAT's varied learning activities and environments.	Yes.
The number of fails and non-submissions was higher than desirable after 2nd opportunity on some modules.	Actions to enhance student engagement and performance at module level have been on-going across all modules. Following a consultation process with current students in spring 2016, through the student reps and Programme Committee, a number of changes have been made to the module delivery sequence for 2016-17 to help spread the workload for SABE and SAP students more evenly, amongst other benefits. Section 7 highlights some issues have persisted, but it is anticipated that there will be a time lag until the changes described above take effect through 2016-17.	Yes.
Modules EV7106, EV7107 and EV7109 cover related subject areas and have experienced lower interest – as described within Section 7 above.	Following review and consultation with current students, through the student reps and Programme Committee – as referred above, the programme team decided not to offer EV7109 in 2015-16 or 2016-17.	Yes.
The programme structure currently limits accessibility to modules EV7112 and	The programme team are in discussion with ACE SQSC with regard to modifications to programme structure aiming to make these module choices easier for students to understand and to open up access to	In progress.

EV7114 due to clashing with 'core' modules EV7111 and EV7113.	modules EV7112 and EV7114 in future. The forthcoming 2016-17 Collaborative Review offers an opportunity to undertake the more major modifications that might be necessary.	
Enhance support for students undertaking the EV7101 Dissertation module to encourage higher quality outputs.	The Dissertation workshops (onsite and distance learning) have been restructured under leadership of a new module leader to focus in more depth on academic research methods – which have been well received – refer to section 7. The suggestion to introduce a compulsory viva voce through minor modification has not been taken forward this year, but will be reviewed in future.	Yes.
Information was requested in advance of each 'onsite' block module regarding the module activities.	During 2015-16 the programme team circulated information 1-week before the start of each module regarding clothing and equipment requirements e.g. to bring laptops with excel, tough shoes/boots etc. when necessary.	Yes.
Continue to monitor staff development needs and training through the new staff appraisal system.	Strategic level discussions during 2015-16 have led to the creation of a modest budget for staff development activities for 2016-17. Staff appraisals following a new GSE academic staff appraisal template are now routine.	Yes.
Problems with the availability and accuracy of data to facilitate the REP Reporting process.	UEL and CAT have worked together on an on-going basis to increase the accuracy of mutually held data. The programme team introduced a new Module Evaluation template and process to make data available in the formats and to the timing required for the REP Reporting process. CAT's systems and processes would benefit from further improvements to facilitate capture of some data, in particular student destinations.	In progress.

Action Plan for 2016/2017

Item No	Issue	Action Proposed (SMART)	Intended Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Timescale for Completion
Unresolved actions carried over from 2015/16					
01	Professional accreditations		CIOB accreditation	Tim Coleridge (PL) with	By end 2016-17

			for SA, SABE and SAP programmes: Part A – UEL and CAT jointly; Part B – CAT independently with CIOB after completion of Part A.	Richard Freeman (Link Tutor)	
02	The programme structure currently limits accessibility to modules EV7112 and EV7114 due to clashing with 'core' modules EV7111 and EV7113.	The programme team are in discussion with ACE SQSC with regard to modifications to programme structure aiming to make these module choices easier for students to understand and to open up access to modules EV7112 and EV7114 in future. The forthcoming 2016-17 Collaborative Review offers an opportunity to undertake the more major modifications that might be necessary.	Consolidate modules EV7111 and EV7113 together, consolidate modules EV7112 and EV7114 together, and/or modify programme structures for 'core' modules to allow greater access to the 'Practice-based' options.	Tim Coleridge (PL) with ACE SQSC	April 2017 (2016-17 Collaborative Review)
03	Problems with the availability and accuracy of data to facilitate the REP Reporting process.	UEL and CAT have worked together on an on-going basis to increase the accuracy of mutually held data. The	Improve data collection for REP Report process	Tim Coleridge (PL) with CAT Student Administration team	By end 2016-7

		programme team introduced a new Module Evaluation template and process to make data available in the formats and to the timing required for the REP Reporting process. CAT's systems and processes would benefit from further improvements to facilitate capture of some data, in particular student destinations.			
New actions identified for 2016/17					
04	The numbers enrolling onto the MSc SAP programme	Review of the SAP programme's focus, structure and marketing.	Consider modifications to the SAP programme's structure and marketing.	Tim Coleridge (PL).	By end 2016-7
05	Review of student data in the REP Report – refer to section 6.	Review of student data in comparison to national benchmarks would be beneficial to understand current student demographics, retention, achievement, completion rates and destinations in more depth.	Enhance the quality and depth of reporting, and help inform recruitment and marketing.	Tim Coleridge (PL).	By end 2016-7
06	Resolve	Review	Enhance the	CAT SSOs with	By end 2016-

	differences between CAT and UEL datasets.	differences between CAT and UEL REP Report datasets, with a view to resolve/rationalise these anomalies, specifically in relation to sections 6 and 7.2.	quality of reporting and records keeping.	UEL Collaborative Administrators.	7
07	Review effects of re-sequencing module EV7102 – refer to section 7.2.	Evaluate whether the changes made to module EV7102 in 2016-17 have yielded better student engagement and achievement.	Enhancement of the student experience and improve student achievement.	Tim Coleridge (PL) with EV7102 Module Leader and student reps.	End-of-year feedback survey
08	Resolve differences between CAT's and UEL's calculation methodologies for module data – refer to section 7.2.	Some differences between CAT's and UEL's datasets for average module marks and standard deviation result from differences in calculation methodologies, which we will seek to unify in the next reporting period.	Enhance the quality of reporting and records keeping.	Tim Coleridge (PL) and CAT SSOs with UEL Collaborative Administrators.	By end 2016-7
09	Timely provision of moderated samples of work for the External Examiner	The External Examiner's report in section 8 raised a concern related to the general conduct of the assessment: limited time given to review the work. Whilst the report	Ensure the assessment process is conducted to UEL and the EEs procedures and satisfaction.	CAT SSOs with UEL Academic Link Tutor and Collaborative Administrators.	2016-17 assessment Boards

		acknowledged that staff work to tight deadlines, more time to review work will be much appreciated.			
10	Review feedback on changes to the academic calendar.	Seek and evaluate student feedback in response to the changes made to the module delivery sequence in 2016-17.	Enhancement of the student experience	Tim Coleridge (PL) with student reps.	End-of-year feedback survey

Professional Diploma in Architecture 2015/16 REP Form

<u>Progress on Previous Year's Action Plan</u>

Actions from the previous year:	*How were they addressed:*	*Is the issue resolved?*
1. Further increase tutorial time whilst students are in residence at CAT	Joint Programme Leaders, John Carter and Ed Green, both attended all module weeks with full time Senior Lecturer Trish Andrews, thereby increasing tutorial time at CAT throughout the whole academic year.	Yes. This is set to continue during module weeks.
2. Increase tutorial contact with 5th Year students during the September to December period in the run up to their exams	Each 5th year student now has the opportunity to have tutorials from the 3 core staff, two professors and a plethora of external consultants during on-site module weeks - as well as at least one face-to-face tutorial outside of CAT; and skype/emails/phone chats on demand.	Yes. The issue was resolved and the changes are now a core part of the tutorial format of the Course.
3. Create a dedicated studio	CAT renovated a further studio	Yes. For the period October 2015

space for 5th Year whilst in residence at CAT.	space for the 5th Year students .	to January 2016.
4. Further develop links with kindred-spirit practitioners.	Item 2 addresses this; and we have invited these practitioners to deliver lectures at CAT, to foster and encourage the relationships to develop and grow.	Ongoing.
5. Staff Development	Staff has access to UEL's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching team. The new Head of School and Lead Academics are responsible for the course. Joint Programme Leaders continue to liaise with them, via the Programme Committee and Academic Council meetings.	Ongoing

Action Plan for 2016/2017

Item No	Issue	Action Proposed (SMART)	Intended Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Timescale for Completion
Unresolved actions carried over from 2015/16					
1	No quiet studio space has yet been provided for the Sept 2015 intake student cohort.	Provide a dedicated studio space for 5th year whilst at residence at CAT.	A 24 hours permanent studio space annually for 5th year students in the run up to their exams.	CAT Management	For the period November 2016 to January 2017 and onward
2.	Further Develop links with kindred-spirit practitioners.	Invite practitioners to deliver lectures at CAT to foster	Develop a core of affiliated architectural practices that provide remote	Joint Programme Leaders	Ongoing

		and encourage good relationships and knowledge transfer.	tutoring and a network of potential employers for the students.		
3.	Better staff development	Conduct annual appraisals, peer reviews, maintain workloads and offer more CPD opportunities.	Better staff development and retention of staff.	CAT Management, Academic Council and Programme Leaders	July 2017
New actions identified for 2016/17					
1.	Complete and Rewrite and revalidate the course to an MArch	Revalidation by UEL and Re-prescription by ARB	A New MArch course	Joint Programme Leaders & UEL Qualifications Committee	April 2017
2.	Discrepancies in student data across both institutions	Agreed clear format of collating data across both Institutions.	Matching student data.	Joint Programmes leaders, SSO's and UEL	June 2017

MSc Renewable Energy and the Built Environment 2015/16 REP Form

Progress on Previous Year's Action Plan

Actions from the previous year:	How were they addressed:	Is the issue resolved?
Ensure all module material is uploaded to Moodle VLE by agreed deadlines. Ensure timetables (even in draft form)	This has been done	yes

are available to students a minimum of one week in advance.		
Review U value and heat loss modelling process, and Excel worksheets that feed into the Buildings Report	These have been reviewed and adjusted accordingly	Yes, students responded well to the changes
Review module material, report outputs, student feedback and guidance for CE7204. Revise if appropriate.	The content and delivery were reviewed and revised by new staff member taking on this lead.	This was well received.
Review module material, report outputs, student feedback and guidance for CE7205. Revise if appropriate.	Additional breadth was provided through the inclusion of topics such as anaerobic digestion and biofuels.	This was well received.
Review the report assignment specification and onsite guidance given to complete the CE7208 PV output.	Sessions covering the use of professional design software were well received, and integrated into the assessed task through the use of modelling to extrapolate findings to a full typical year of operation.	Yes
Increase number of Open Day opportunities available to potential students during onsite module weeks	Opportunities increased, but course then withdrawn	yes
Introduce interview process and a short application test	Interview and quiz/test introduced, but course then withdrawn	yes
Review new Moodle and Turnitin instructions against student feedback	Students have adjusted well to the change of instructions	yes
Monitor and review student interaction with Grademark feedback	Students have responded well to feedback on Grademark	yes

Action Plan 2016/17

Issue	Action Proposed (SMART)	Intended Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Timescale for Completion
REBE closing	Support all remaining students in completing MSc, or Diploma according to their target	All students supported in completing all requisite modules to the best of their abilities	Frances Hill	February 2018
REBE closing	Prepare ACEL mapping for transfer of any students who wish to transfer to other CAT courses	All students who wish to do so, transfer to another MSc course	Frances Hill	February 2018

4. Student Feedback and Engagement

Student Feedback

There are a number of systems in place to facilitate recording of feedback from students and communication of how feedback has been used to enhance programme delivery:

1. **Module Survey:** There is an on-line feedback survey released for each module (typically accessible through the Moodle VLE) that can be completed anonymously, in which students can score their level of satisfaction with and provide written comments on the module's academic activities and administration;

2. **Feedback Meeting:** There is a feedback meeting held between students and key staff of each programme during each residential module onsite at CAT, which gives an opportunity for wider feedback on the module. Three times per year these meetings are run as Staff/Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings following a broader agenda, inviting programme wide discussion and feedback;

3. **Programme Reps:** The 'Programme Reps' represent the courses in the GSE's Academic Council, Programme Committee and SSLC meetings, amongst other official duties, acting as an on-going conduit for student feedback on programme wide matters. This initiative aims to be a valuable forum for engagement and communication between staff and students of the programmes. Current Reps can be contacted through the Student Support Officers. It is intended that Reps will act for a year at a time. CAT offers Reps an 'incentive' as a gesture of thanks for providing this valued service – students interested in acting as a Programme Rep can contact the Student Support Officers for further details.

We aim to release a copy of the feedback for each module within a month, which will be made available through Moodle.

MSc SA Student Feedback

Area	Strengths and Areas for Improvement
Overall Satisfaction	Strengths: 1. Positive outcomes from consultation over changes to the MSc SA-SABE-SAP module delivery sequence for 2016-17; 2. The most positive finding from the 2015-16 student survey was that 64% would 'definitely' recommend CAT to a friend, with the remaining 36% 'highly likely' to recommend CAT. Areas for Improvement:

	3. Engagement of DL students in feedback surveys on Moodle. Improve to indicate how the feedback will be taken forward / where it will be considered; 4. Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that the experience of on-site students appears more positive than that of distance learners.
Teaching on the programme	Strengths: 1. Spreading 'Induction' activities through the first week, (mixed with academic lectures) worked well; 2. Moodle Discussion forums had not been used much, but following encouragement and more regular tutor input usage picked up on EV7107 Energy Flows Part B and afterwards; 3. Very positive feedback on practical workshops, particularly: EV7110 lime kiln "fantastic", scavenging/shelters "really good experience", hemp-lime "Great to get hands-on experience. Very good", timber practical "FANTASTIC"; 4. Introduction of more site tours e.g. EV7110 use of low-impact materials onsite in different buildings – "seeing and visualising these and the thinking behind them very valuable"; 5. Expert visiting lecturers contributions to the delivery of the programme were greatly valued, e.g. EV7110 earth lecture "One of the highlights of the module … Very inspiring. Excellent speaker, excellent educator…. The demonstration boxes were amazing teaching tool. Entertainment as much as learning. Excellent science communication." 6. Group activities with ProfDip students appreciated, e.g. EV7110; 7. Problem based learning enjoyed and experiencing tensions between differing academic perspectives much appreciated e.g. EV7105 integrated transport workshops. This approach could be integrated more widely; 8. Students (onsite and distance learning) given the opportunity to work on live projects – as described within section 7, Modules EV7111 & 113; 9. Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that the quality of teaching/lecturing by GSE academic staff and visiting lecturers was rated between 'Very Good' or 'Excellent', and the CAT site as a place to study was rated as 'Excellent'. Areas for Improvement: 1. Management of questions from the audience in lectures requires on-going attention; 2. EV7102 Core module part 2 student projects – lack of DL student engagement and negative feedback on pace of study for part-time students. EV7102 has been split across Sept-Nov in 2016-17 – better for part-time study. Core pt 2 (Nov.) is in a different format

	in several other ways – in order to address concerns from last time and improve student experience for DL use in particular; 3. Students would like more group work earlier on in course; Request for more time to be spent outdoors.
Assessment and Feedback	Strengths: 1. Staff have been commended for their detailed feedback given to students, of 'generally very good/excellent' quality. Areas for Improvement: 1. Students would like the chance to present their work as an output – e.g. parallel to the Prof Dip pin-ups on the Monday of each module, e.g. as posters?
Academic Support	Strengths: 1. The structure of academic support offered on the programmes is well formulated, coordinated and general well communicated; 2. Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that tutorials were rated as being 'Satisfactory', though the availability of staff for Skype Tutorials was rated 'Very Good', and on site tutorials were rated between 'Very Good' and 'Satisfactory'. Areas for Improvement: 1. Tutor–student interaction: expectations of tutor-student interactions needed to be clearer – including tutor availability. For new enrolment (Sept '16) tutors have used a standardised introductory letter for new students, each tutor adds availability etc. – we hope this is an improvement. 2. Need to maintain better links with students who are taking extended periods between active modules. SSOs are now more regularly sending tutors an extract of all their students' records 4x per year, after assessment boards.
Learning Resources	Strengths: 1. Module Guides – well received and generally successfully distributed a week ahead of each module; 2. Appreciation of how feedback from previous years had been incorporated in module development – e.g. in EV7110 module guide; 3. Routine provision of audio recordings of lecture presentations, appreciated by onsite and DL students. Student Support staff received additional training to boost audio level before upload to Moodle. Some issues on-going – see below; 4. Audio recording software made available to tutors working with Skype sessions – several recordings have been made available for EV7102 (Sept 2016) Skype seminars;

	5. Video recording: trials were undertaken using Swivl software/hardware (EV7104 Dec '15 and EV7105 Jan '16), which received mixed feedback, so the decision was made to use a different system. New equipment has been purchased and installed in the Sheppard Theatre (web-cam, hard-drive etc.) to facilitate use of UEL's 'Panopto' lecture capture software, with recordings commenced on EV7102 pt 1 (Sept 2016 core module) – this has not been without hiccups, but work in progress. Initial feedback indicates that overall, Panopto works well for navigating through lectures – good interface. More detailed feedback is to be collated and reviewed in due course; 6. Time taken to upload lecture slides to Moodle: previous negative feedback re delays, students therefore waiting for key resources; addressed by SSOs working a schedule to get them uploaded within the week – even when this requires taking them home for uploading. Most (at least) are now going up more swiftly. Previous year's lectures have also been made available as a starting point. Areas for Improvement: 1. Delays receiving student numbers, student cards and student entitlements including Moodle and Athens access from UEL – refer to section 3 above; 2. Audio recordings – audio quality was sometimes very poor e.g. problems with microphone use. Practices and procedures have been improved but on-going attention is required to ensure the recordings are good enough. Results from the 205-16 student survey showed that the quality of recorded audio lectures was rated between 'Satisfactory' and 'Poor'. 3. Request for pre-reading well in advance of each module, i.e. before the Module Guide is released. ~6-weeks prior to start of the programme (August 2016) new students were sent an updated and enhanced reading list including study skills links. MLs will aim to do this 2-months before each module; 4. Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that most were only 'Somewhat satisfied' with the access to learning resources (Moodle, journals, e-books).
Careers and progression advice	Strengths: 1. Former students contributions to the delivery of the formal teaching activities were greatly appreciated, e.g. EV7107 'Moisture in buildings' and 'Cooling effect of small urban parks' lectures; EV7110 rammed earth vault structural load test experiment: "really nice to have former students contribute their experience. … Really good. Phenomenal. …World first. Wow this is powerful stuff. Really liked her lecture.", …;

	2. Use of Moodle 'Careers' discussion forum, SA and GSE Facebook groups to disseminate information on conferences, job adverts and other relevant opportunities; 3. Expert visiting lecturers offer valuable opportunities for networking and some work placements, e.g. EV7108 Ofgem policy development lecture. Areas for Improvement: 1. Lack of taught content in enterprise and entrepreneurship – although these are not formal learning outcomes from these programmes.
Student Support (pastoral care)	Strengths: 1. Availability of 1:1 pastoral tutorials better communicated than previously, but purpose would benefit from clarification. Areas for Improvement: 1. Onsite tutorials – on-going request to MLs to clarify arrangements and purpose of tutorials;
Admin.	Strengths: 1. Clothing / equipment needs – now identified in module Welcome emails; 2. Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that communications from CAT (email, phone) are rated 'Very Good'. Areas for Improvement: 1. Clothing requirements – request to module leaders to clarify needs in good time.
Domestic arrangements, rooms & equipment, H&S, AOB	Strengths: 1. PCs in lecture rooms and communal spaces working quicker/more fluidly; 2. Acoustics in Sheppard Theatre – problems identified earlier in the year have largely been addressed by installation of booster speakers – on-going action is to ensure these are switched on and working; 3. Wider opportunities onsite at CAT (volunteering etc.): communication between wider staff body and students has been developed through Monday volunteering opportunities – which were greatly liked by those who participated, and interviewing on building use surveys (EV7107). Needs to be picked up over the new academic year – task for SSOs to ask CAT staff if there are

	volunteer opportunities ahead of modules. Areas for Improvement: 1. Inductive hearing loop in the Sheppard Theatre – use of individual loops requires individuals asking for assistance, devices being charged and set-up. Issue communicated to Academic Council; 2. Acoustics in Restaurant Extension – unacceptably reverberant and noisy when occupied by large groups during residential modules. Issue communicated to Academic Council; 3. Provision of PCs routinely in communal spaces containing key module learning resources, akin to an onsite 'mirror' of Moodle; 4. Science symposium – due for revival? To offer conference style presentation of successful student dissertations and opportunity to publish papers through CAT web-site.

Prof Dip Student feedback

Area	Strengths and Areas for Improvement
Overall Satisfaction	Strengths: Overall students are very happy with the course; and various forms of feedback evidences this. Areas for Improvement: Keep improving the course's inclusiveness; continue with various forms of pedagogical approaches. i.e learning by doing, etc; and act, where applicable, on any negative experiences or issues.
Teaching on the programme	Strengths: Very positive feedback on the type of teaching and experience students are receiving. At external examiner interviews in January 2016 the vast majority of students *articulated praise for the commitment, dedication and quality of the academic and support staff at CAT*. Areas for Improvement: Allow for more staff development in order to maintain and improve teaching methods. This is inter-related to monitoring the intense workload of staff, to avoid burn-out.
Assessment and Feedback	Strengths: External examiners deemed the assessment methods to be thorough, conscientious and objective; as well as being applied in an appropriate manner.

	Students are happy with the various methods and opportunities that allow feed-back.
	Areas for Improvement: It is our intention to re-work the mark-sheets for all projects, so that the overall mark more accurately reflects the 'big picture' of each of the projects, whilst still encompassing the CAT ethos.
Academic Support	Strengths: The Prof Dip staff team have a strong dynamic of supportiveness and inclusiveness.
	Areas for Improvement: The above support needs to extend further, i.e. from the CAT management, the Head of School and the Academic Council.
Learning Resources	Strengths: Students on the whole are happy with the level of learning resources at CAT and with the online learning resources on Moodle.
	Areas for Improvement: There were significant delays with access to the online UEL learning resources and course documents therein, particularly at the beginning of the academic year. Close liaison with UEL staff could improve on this. During this period the Student Support Officers and staff uploaded resources onto other various formats (e.g. Dropbox), to allow students to have access to these vital resources.
Careers and progression advice	Strengths: The Reflective Essays coursework, at the beginning and end of the Course, allows staff to view particular interests. This is built upon during the students' progress and is added to via the various opportunities with kindred spirit practitioners described above. This is ongoing. As an illustration of the effectiveness of these links, we have past students who now work for Glenn Howells Architects, Architype and Hopkins Architects.
	Areas for Improvement: We will continue to develop and foster the connections with Architectural Practitioners, via our lecture and external tutoring series. However, the potential resource that is existing alumni needs further exploration, in order to aid existing students' development,

	informing them of possible openings in various professional practices and to continue to support students long after they have left the course.
Student Support (pastoral care)	Strengths: Students have commented on their appreciation of the Student Support Officers, the Student Finance Officer and the Education Operations Officer; and the care and attention they receive from the facilities staff. Areas for Improvement: Continue to monitor these relationships, in particular that of the Student Support Officers team which has been rearranged and staff reduced, especially with increasing student numbers projected.

MSc REBE Student Feedback

Area	Strengths and Areas for Improvement
Overall Satisfaction	Strengths: Many positive, appreciative comments – see below Areas for Improvement: not all students are best satisfied by the same dynamic/s. Variation, and range of opportunities to be maintained as of key importance
Teaching on the programme	Strengths: "key light bulb moment", "group sizes good", "good timing of practicals", "seminar sessions good", "some lectures over intensive", "good combination of internal, external lecturers", "evening lectures sharp, snappy and great", "excel practicals have improved" Areas for Improvement: suggested mix of intensive and lighter lectures – to be reviewed

Assessment and Feedback	Strengths: formative assessment/support on workshops appreciated Areas for Improvement: .. we need to obtain more student feedback on this area
Academic Support	Strengths: Tutorial sessions were found to be useful and reassuring, supportive Areas for Improvement: ..but might be more useful earlier in the week
Learning Resources	Strengths: Areas for Improvement: delay in receiving student numbers, UEL Direct access for all online resources
Careers and progression advice	Strengths: appreciate external lecturers Areas for Improvement: suggestion of visit from local RE companies
Student Support (pastoral care)	*comments on pastoral care were not solicited*

Student Engagement

The details of CAT's wide range of student engagement activities may be found in the Student Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy.

5. External Examiner Reports

<u>MSc SA</u>

Professor Pete Walker (University of Bath) is the current External Examiner for the MSc Arch: AEES & MSc SA, SABE and SAP programmes; his services are anticipated to continue until 2017. A copy of Prof. Pete Walker's External Examiners Report for 2015-16 for the MSc Arch: AEES & MSc SA, SABE and SAP programmes is included within Appendix 1. A copy of UEL School's Responses to External Examiner report will be provided within Appendix 2 once available.

Prof. Pete Walker's report for 2015-16 confirmed that the standards set within the field, the processes of assessment and the marks awarded were all of an acceptable standard.

His report raised positive comments related to such areas as:
"The work delivered by CAT is to be commended for its high standards."
"The staff are to be commended for their detailed feedback given to students."

He also commented that:
"This is an impressive MSc programme, delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff at CAT. The standards obtained by the students are entirely appropriate for the MSc level. I have no concerns here."

The school has asked us to respond to one matter:

- My only (small) criticism (once again) was limited time given to review the work. I appreciate that staff work to tight deadlines, but more time to review work will be much appreciated.

The Programme Leader and Programme Staff will consider these points within the forthcoming academic year.

<u>Prof Dip</u>

Main actions raised in External Examiner's feedback June 2016:

1) Raise the standard of written work, particularly the proof-reading ability of the students :

We have encouraged students to read more widely; adopting a library-sharing facility, sharing both staff and student literature. In so doing, to help them to recognize precise, cogent texts that can inform their writing styles; We have

implemented reading seminars and have encouraged them to proof-read each others' work. In September 2016 we appointed a part-time lecturer to focus on written work within the course.

The standard of the student intake also ranges widely and with this comes an attendant challenge: to both improve our 'bottom end' and push our more able students; all within the context of CAT's caring and sharing approach to higher education.

The proposed MArch programme will also reduce the written (typically essays) content of the course and will be replaced with more appropriate design content, as is the norm in most Part II courses. It will, include a dissertation element within the longer (2 years) course. This dissertation will be preceded by a history and theory (H&T) element of the course, including an essay arising from one of the texts within the H&T course.

MSc REBE

Main actions raised in External Examiner's feedback June 2016:
- External Examiner encouraged us to identify and support any of our students who seem to have stuck at the lower end of the pass mark range in their work so they may progress better. This will be done.

6. Recruitment, Retention and Destination Data

MSc SA

Recruitment

The popularity and appeal of the new SA, SABE and SAP programmes has grown steadily since their launch, evidenced by higher numbers of enquiries, applications and enrolments year-on-year. The overall intake in September 2015, 49, more than doubled the intake in September 2014. Further, the overall intake in September 2016 has increased significantly again to 75. This is very encouraging, especially in the context of a challenging climate for entry to Masters programmes.

The number enrolling onto the SAP programme has increased significantly this year, but the overall number is still much lower than the other two programmes, indicating that a review would be beneficial of the programme's focus, structure (which includes a high proportion of core modules) and marketing.

Overall, 27 (55%) students enrolled FT and 22 (45%) PT in September 2015, compared to 45% students enrolled FT and 55% PT in September 2014.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity stated by the majority (80%) of entrants to the programme in 2015-16 was 'White' (including White British, White Scottish and Other White Background), which is only very marginally more diverse than the 2014-15 intake, 83% of whom stated their ethnicity as White.

Age on Entry

The SA programmes have effectively attracted students from across the 20-70 age ranges, with the highest proportions in the 25-29 and 35-39 ranges (both 22%).

Gender

The data for entrants to the programmes in 2015-16 was 51% female and 49% male, which is similar to data recorded for the 2014-15 intake, and indicates that the programmes continue to attract a well balanced cohort overall

Entrance Qualifications

Students joining the programme in 2015-16 included a high proportion with an undergraduate degree (59%), and a significant number with some form of post-graduate qualification (29%). The number joining the programme without a prior degree (8%)

Retention

The SA course has a high retention rate (86%). Only a small number of students have withdrawn within the last year, although this is a significantly higher proportion (14%) than the numbers who withdrew historically from the former MSc Architecture: AEES programmes from 2011-2014

Achievement

CAT's data records the number of students to achieve an award from the MSc SA, SABE and SAP programmes in 2015-16, who graduated in November 2016, as fourteen. A greater depth of evaluation will become possible when the SA, SABE and SAP programmes mature in 2016-17

Completion

CAT's data records 'completion' rates for the 22 SA, SABE and SAP students who enrolled in September 2014, as follows:

- Overall, 23% have been awarded in 2015-16, including those who transferred award mid-programme.
- 19% completed the award that they enrolled onto.
- One student completed an intermediate award in lieu of completing the award they had enrolled onto.
- 77% of students have not reached the threshold for their award, which includes part-time students still within their expected normal length of study.

Destination Data

Increased efforts to seek alumni feedback in recent years has generated a welcome number of testimonials from former students about their positive experiences of the programme, how it influenced their career paths and where they have gone on to live, work, study or pursue more advanced research since graduating.

Some testimonials have been received from 2015-16 graduates, but only a small number, and insufficient data exists to review destinations through numerical analysis.

Prof Dip

Recruitment

In September 2016 we increased enrolment numbers further with an intake of 26 students, our highest ever intake - an increase of 8% on 2015 numbers.

Ethnicity

The percentage from the September 2015 intake is extremely disappointing with 100% being white ethnicity, which is much more than in previous years. Throughout the UK the general trend for Part II is 79% White ethnicity, with the remaining 21% being made up of largely Asian ethnicity students.

Age on Entry

As predicted last year, with changes in conditions from the Student Loan Companies (whereby architecture students will no longer be able to take more than 3 years between their Part I and Part II degrees to be eligible for loans) we have seen less students over the age of 30 undertaking the course, due to a lack of loan funding.

Gender

The RIBA Educational Statics of 2014/15 (for all types of Part 2 courses) shows that 43% of women enter Part II courses. We are slightly lower than this average, with our current 2015/16 intake having a percentage of 39% of women entrants.

Entrance Qualifications

As has been the general trend, the number of students who enter the Course having a UK first degree (mostly Part I), with 2015/16 statistics showing a record of 89%. This is slightly higher than the RIBA Part II average of 85%.

Retention

In 2015/16 one student from the September 2015 intake withdrew. The student failed two modules attempted and deemed it to be in her own best interests to discontinue the course

Achievement

No text

Completion

There were a few students from 2015-16 who failed to submit their final outstanding work in the time frame allocated and thus only received a Post Graduate Diploma (4) or Post Graduate Certificate

Destination Data

Of the 26 graduating students from the September 2014 intake, many have found employment and are undertaking their Part 3 examinations, progressing towards registering as fully-qualified Architects in the UK

MSc REBE

Recruitment

Although recruitment of full time students was up this year, part time numbers saw a sharp fall, leaving overall numbers showing a continuing downward trend. The course has since been withdrawn, no further intake was made in 2016

Ethnicity

Of the small intake of 14, only one student (7%) was Black, and one (7%) identified ethnically as Other

Age on Entry

No text

Gender

The percentage of female students in the intake was also down, at 7%.

Entrance Qualifications

<u>Retention</u>

Four students withdrew from the programme from the 2015/16 intake. In terms of actual student numbers this figure is similar to previous years. However, due to the lower intake numbers the withdrawal rate represents 29% of the total intake, which is the same as from the 2014 intake

<u>Achievement</u>

Although the total number of degrees awarded was down again this year, reflecting the decrease in student numbers, the number of students achieving MSc was up, from 7 to 10. Of these, 6 achieved Merit or Distinction

<u>Completion</u>

66.7% of 2014 Full Time entrants graduated in 2015/16, 50% achieving the full MSc.

18.8% of 2013 Part Time entrants graduated in 2015/16, 6.3% achieving the full MSc.

<u>Destination Data</u>

Most of our students do the course alongside employment in the field.   There are no statistics on new employment. There has been no recorded progression to higher levels of study.

7. Teaching and Learning

The CAT Teaching and Learning strategy was agreed by Academic Council in January 2017. It confirms CAT's commitment to "ensuring that those students graduating from one of our GSE programmes are inspired to bring about change, well informed with specialist subject knowledge and have mastered the skills that will enable them to work towards sustainability in whatever path in life they follow.".

The strategy has a series of aims and success indicators that show how CAT underpins that commitment:

Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards

The GSE aims to ...	Indicators
• Maintain academic standards on existing programmes	• Review of course syllabus and content in line with QAA benchmarks, professional body accreditation and 'levelness' in keeping with updates in these areas. Update programme and module specifications as required
• Ensure compliance with national and international standards when designing new academic programmes	• Design new programmes by aligning to subject benchmarks and accreditation requirements, by using naming conventions and by alignment to correct academic standards. Ensure these are explicit in learning outcomes and aligned assessment tasks. • Publish clear procedures for the design and development of new programmes
• Integrate internal and external review into the assessment of existing and new programmes.	• External examiner recommendations, input from professional practice and industry, the validating body, student representation and alumni.

Assuring and enhancing academic quality

GSE aims to ...	Indicators
• Inspire students to investigate energy and global sustainability issues and their solutions and to want to bring about change. • Teach students using enthusiastic,	• The production of high quality dissertations/major design projects covering a range of contemporary sustainability, renewable energy and energy issues.

knowledgeable and skilled staff. • Ensure teaching staff have access to training to enhance teaching and learning skills and are kept informed about changes to teaching and learning techniques, such as improvements in teaching technology and availability of new academic information to students. • Inspire by the inclusion of guest speakers from a wide variety of renewable energy and sustainability disciplines. • Facilitate debate and critical analysis through developing a collaborative, friendly and thought-provoking atmosphere between students and between students and staff, and through a focus on evidence-based studies. • Use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods to inspire.	• A staff base of academics, professional practitioners and consultants. • Staff take an active part in peer-observation of teaching, and take part in available training opportunities. Training needs are fed back to Academic Council following annual professional reviews of lecturers performance. • The involvement of external speakers which enhances the module delivery. • Student feedback at the end of modules to gauge student engagement. • Student engagement in spoken debates, group seminars, on-line discussion forums, skype tutorials, written debates in essays or projects and reference to competing theories in peer-reviewed literature. • Appropriate use of mixed teaching methods such as lectures, group seminars, student-led learning, practical activities, on-line activities.
• Inform students of the knowledge base behind the multi-disciplinary science of sustainability and of the potential solutions. • Garner an appreciation of the value of peer-reviewed evidence and information. • Encourage critical analysis of scientific theory, renewable energy engineering and physical building options and of political and social ideas as appropriate to the study topic.	• Assess student understanding by employing a variety of formative and summative assessment techniques aligned to learning outcomes. • The inclusion of debate, critical analysis and an understanding of uncertainty in student's work, with an appreciation of the value of peer-reviewed literature. • High proportion of students gaining merit or distinction degree classes by producing work at Masters level which is deemed worthy of >60%, and confirmed as such by moderation and external markers.
• Enable students to be able to bring about positive change towards sustainability by embedding skills based on professional practice in teaching, learning and assessment. • Employ staff with up-to date	• Students entering sustainability and related professions, gathered by destination surveys/Linked-In/alumni networks. • Ensure that the complement of teaching staff are actively involved in

experience of working in sustainability, renewable energy and built environment industries, who have consultancy or research expertise. • Set assessments will embed work-related skills. • Develop programme and module curricula which include content based on up-to-date case-studies, examples, theories and ideas taken from current best practice or from new information gained from academic or applied research. • Encourage inclusion by incorporating diverse examples from different nations, industries and ensure an international curriculum. • Use teaching and learning activities which make best use of CAT's unique on-site living laboratory as a tool to practice skills, compare techniques, and examine the practicality of sustainability, land-use management, building and energy options as appropriate to the study topic. • Produce graduates who are knowledgeable in their subject area.	professional practice, consultancy or research by ensuring CPD, involvement in consultancy projects or publication of peer-reviewed literature. • Annual monitoring of module curriculum to ensure staff current professional or academic experience is embedded in teaching, learning and assessment activities. • Annual review of teaching and assessment materials to ensure inclusion of international examples. • Develop formative and summative assessment pieces which are aligned to work skills; such as practical reports, data analysis, presentation skills.

This annual quality report includes the actions we will take in the next 12 months to move towards achieving those aims.

8. Student Learning and Enhancement

The CAT Student Learning and Enhancement Strategy was agreed by Council at its 13 April meeting. It has the following at its core:

"All CAT students' learning will be developed and enhanced by excellent, up-to-date teaching, enriched by comprehensive student support and engagement, and by research and scholarship.

We will support each student not only to acquire or further develop the knowledge and skills necessary to practise as an environmental professional, but to adopt the attitudes of reflective practice, lifelong learning and critical thinking.

We seek to deliver the highest quality learning experience for all our students and to instil in them the motivation and skills to engage fully with their programme and make the most of all the resources we provide, within a nurturing and collegial environment."

The strategy is enacted through an implementation plan with the following ten key aims:

1. To offer a high-quality student experience, delivering programmes that are academically rigorous, professionally relevant and address the academic and professional development needs of our students and the requirements for accreditation of relevant professional bodies
2. To enable all students to engage as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience and across all aspects of their life at CAT
3. To challenge and support students to realise their ambitions through active engagement with their studies and full participation in the academic community
4. To enhance learning opportunities for students by using a variety of approaches to teaching and learning, delivery formats and methods of assessment across all programmes
5. To continue to recruit, develop and value well qualified, professional staff and to ensure all staff are appropriately qualified, supported and developed.
6. To ensure that our facilities and resources are of high quality, appropriate for the specialist nature of our programmes
7. To enhance practices and provide new opportunities that improves the retention, progression and attainment and employability of our students.
8. To enhance opportunities for the personal development of each student, both within and outside the curriculum to support their progression into employment, further study or to enhance their potential for career progression.
9. To identify and share good practice across all CAT HE
10. To encourage participation by all who can benefit from the CAT student experience

This implementation plan, because it is CAT-wide and specific, stands alone outside this AQR.

9. Areas of Good Practice and Highlights

<u>MSc SA</u>

a) Good and Innovative Practice

1. Video lecture capture (trials of Swivl 'robot', software and cloud storage) and new audio software used for recording Skype seminars
2. Students (onsite and distance learning) given the opportunity to work on live projects: Modules EV7111 & 113.
3. Problem based learning during module EV7105 onsite practical design workshops .

b) Programme Highlights

1.The popularity and appeal of the new SA, SABE and SAP programmes has grown steadily since their launch, evidenced by higher numbers of enquiries, applications and enrolments year-on-year. The overall intake in September 2015, 49, more than doubled the intake in September 2014 (22). Further, in advance of the next reporting period, the overall intake in September 2016 has increased significantly again to 75, which is very encouraging
2.Successful completion of the AEES transitional arrangements.
3.The very positive student feedback received about practical workshops delivered through the year during onsite residential 'block' modules at CAT, particularly during module EV7110 'Sustainable materials'
4.Results from the 2015-16 student survey showed that the quality of teaching/lecturing by GSE academic staff and visiting lecturers was rated between 'Very Good' or 'Excellent', and the CAT site as a place to study was rated as 'Excellent'.

<u>Prof Dip</u>

a) Good and Innovative Practice

1. Introduction of working with invited crafts people, on innovative student-designed build projects e.g. a thatched writer's hut, using prefabricated thatched ' cassette' panels; and a timber frame, straw bale, low-cost housing prototype.
2. Student-led, community consultation/engagement events. Innovative ideas included a pop-up café; a "van with a plan" roving consultation vehicle; leading to a community exhibition - in the North-Wales town of Harlech.
3. Introduction of a Summer school master class developed around the sustainable knowledge of Visiting Professors David Lea and Pat Borer; included invited Architects from the profession. The latter encourages network opportunities for the student body with potential employers.

b) Programme Highlights

1. Our visiting Professor, Pat Borer, was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List, for his continued services toward to low-energy and sustainable architecture; and his work and teaching over 40 years at CAT
2. We continue to attract high-profile architects and leading practitioners from other disciplines to deliver CAT's monthly Architecture lectures, amongst whom was Stirling-Prize-nominated and twice winner of the RIBA Manser Medal, Chris Loyn; Nick Cramp, Senior Partner at leading environmental engineers, Max Fordham; and multi-award-winning Glenn Howells. It is extremely encouraging that they are prepared to give time and support to CAT to share their ideas and experience with our students.

MSc REBE

a) Good and Innovative Practice

1.Alignment of teaching weeks with those of MSc SA/SAP/SABE, and Prof Dip Architecture has enabled development of out-of-class exchange of ideas and experience related to Energy, Climate, Built Environment
2.Field trip to see Biomass processing and installation
3.Role play discussion of issues around wind development

b) Programme Highlights

The course has benefitted from having a lawyer on the course. This has offered alternative insights to policy issues.
Field Trip to see biomass processing and installation
Four of our graduates have returned during the year to lecture, showing impact of their dissertation work on their field of employment

10. 2017/18 Annual Action Plan

[see separate document]

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