

Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Visiting Board
to De Montfort University**

**Leicester School of Architecture
Faculty of Art and Design**

**Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural
Practice, Part Three**

Date of Visiting Board: 22 June 2006

1. Information About the Courses

1.1 **Courses offered for revalidation:**
Post Graduate Diploma in Architectural Practice Part 3,
12 months PT

1.2 **Address of the Institution where the courses are delivered**

Leicester School of Architecture
Department of Product and Spatial Design
Faculty of Art and Design
De Montfort University
The Gateway
Leicester
LE1 9BH

T: 0116 257 7555
F: 0116 250 6281
W: www.dmu.ac.uk

1.2 **Name of Awarding Body**
De Montfort University

1.3 **Name of Head of School**
Professor Hassan Abdalla

2. Membership of the Visiting Board

2.1 The members of the RIBA Visiting Board for the visit on 22 June 2006 were
Patrick Monaghan (Chair)
Elspeth Clements
Ben Barr (Non-architect member)
Jack Dunne
Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk (RIBA) was in attendance as Secretary to the Board.

Ms Louise Marshall-Nichols acted as Institutional Facilitator on behalf of the School of Architecture

3. Procedures & Criteria for the Visit

3.1 The Visiting Board was carried out under the 'RIBA Procedures for the Validation of UK Courses and Examinations in Architecture,' published July 2003, effective from September 2003, 'Tomorrow's Architect,' published March 2003, effective from September 2003, and 'Description & Regulations for the recognition of courses, programmes and examinations in Professional Practice and Management, (Part 3) in the UK. For more information see www.architecture.com.

4. Recommendations of the Visiting Board to the Royal Institute of British Architects Education Committee

4.1 The Visiting Board recommends to the RIBA Education Committee **Continued Validation with Conditions** of:

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice Part 3
12 months PT

4.2 The next Visiting Board to consider Part Three should take place in 2010.

5. Criteria for Validation

5.1 On the basis of the sample of academic portfolios examined and subject to satisfactory discharge of the condition placed on the course, the Visiting Board was satisfied that all the students graduating from the course and examination listed in 4.1 above satisfied all the Criteria for Validation (which are held in common by the RIBA for validation and the ARB for prescription).

6. Standards

6.1 On the basis of the sample of academic portfolios examined, the work from previous year of the course listed in 4.1 was inspected during the visit and was found to meet the required standards.

7. Conditions of Validation

The Visiting Board recommends that the course named in 4.1 receive continued validation with conditions. The following conditions of recognition apply;

- i. That a Revisiting Board visit the School in 2007 to view the latest assessments:
 - a. If a Part One/Part Two full Visiting Board is invited to visit the School in 2007, the Part Three revisit could be timed to co-incide.
 - b. If there is no Part One/Part Two full visit in 2007, a separate Part Three visit will take place. In either event some continuity with the present Board will be provided.

The Board's concerns centred on aspects of the quality assurance of the course, specifically the ability of the Professional Examiners (known at De Montfort as External Assessors) and the External Examiner, who (in the opinion of the Board) between them did not have sufficient recent experience of examining at other schools and therefore had no benchmarks upon which to judge comparability.

- ii. An interim report describing what measures the School will take to address the conditions should be submitted to the RIBA Validation Committee for its meeting on 21 March 2007.

8. Standard Requirements of Recognition

- 8.1 RIBA recognition of all courses/qualifications is dependent upon:
- i. external examiners being appointed for the course;
 - ii. any significant changes to the courses and examinations being submitted to the RIBA;
 - iii. any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being reported to the RIBA so that, where appropriate, recognition may formally be transferred to the new title by the RIBA;
 - iv. submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the course/qualifications listed in 4.

9. Summary of the Recommendations, Advice & Commentary Contained in the Full Report

- 9.1 The Visiting Board had every confidence in the content and delivery of the Part Three course at the Leicester School of Architecture. The course benefits from dedicated, competent staff, a long-standing, successful and mutually beneficial arrangement with the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham and the support of University senior management.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Visiting Board has made the following recommendations. The RIBA expects the Institution to report on action taken or planned as a result of the

recommendations in the annual monitoring returns submitted by the school and in the mid term review. Failure by an Institution to act on recommendations may result in a course being conditioned by a future Visiting Board.

- 10.1.1 The Board recommends that the School either appoints a replacement External Examiner or an additional External Examiner who is in a position to make clear and up to date judgements regarding comparability of standards with other Part Three courses.
- 10.1.2 The RIBA recommends that future appointments of Professional Examiners should be of individuals who are already on the RIBA List of Part 3 Professional Examiners prior to appointment. Although not a formal requirement, it is expected that the replacement/additional External Examiner is also appointed from the RIBA list of Professional Examiners.
- 10.2 **Advice**
- 10.2.1 The Visiting Board offers the following advice to the Institution on desirable, but not essential improvements, which it is felt would assist course development and/or raise standards;
- 10.2.2 The Board advises the School to provide an induction session for external assessors and external examiners.
- 10.2.3 Assignments currently carry 60% of the weighting of the course. The Board considered that there was perhaps too much dependence on the assignments and advises that the School adjust the relative weightings of the course.

11. Summary of Previous Visiting Board Reports

- 11.1 The last full RIBA ARB Visiting Board to De Montfort University, which also considered Part Three, took place on the 21 and 22 February 2002.

The Board recommended that Conditional Continued Validation be granted to:

- Part One: BA (Hons) Architecture (three years full time)
BA Architecture (five years part-time)
- Part Two Graduate Diploma in Architecture (Two years full time preceded by a year in practice)
Diploma in Architecture (Three years part-time)

The Board recommended that Continued Validation be granted to:

- Part Three: Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice.

- 11.2 “The Part Three course, delivered in partnership with the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham, was found to be satisfactory. Students’ case studies and other submissions demonstrated an adequate knowledge of the structure of the profession and building industry, building economics, office management, procurement, planning and building regulatory systems.”

“The school benefits from an experienced and caring staff team, clearly committed to the courses and to the school.

Students commended the friendly, supportive atmosphere and accessibility of teaching staff, both in the studio and for non-design parts of the course. The School has excellent studio and workshop facilities and a national research profile that clearly informs teaching and curriculum development. The School is at a critical point in planning its future development with many opportunities arising from the new organisational structure, the international connections of the new head of school, the ambitions of the new vice-chancellor and the significant physical redevelopment of the campus. The Board encourages the school to forge new links within the university, the city and region to the benefit of the School and the development of the courses.”

12. Details of the Conditions in Item 7.

- 12.1 The Board had serious concerns about the procedures for the appointment and training of Professional and External Examiners. Although the letter of the RIBA Regulations in respect of the appointment of Professional Examiners had been observed, the Board considered that the Professional Examiners (known at De Montfort as External Assessors) and the External Examiner, between them did not have sufficient recent experience of examining at other schools and therefore had no benchmarks upon which to judge comparability.

As a result, the following conditions have been applied in respect of the Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice (Part Three):

- i. That a Revisiting Board visit the School in 2007 to view the latest assessments:

- a. If a Part One/Part Two full Visiting Board is invited to visit the School in 2007, the Part Three revisit could be timed to co-incide.
- b. If there is no Part One/Part Two full visit in 2007, a separate Part Three visit will take place.

If a full Board to view Parts One, Two and Three is to take place, an additional member with Part Three Expertise should be included.

If it is a Part Three only revisit, the Revisiting Board should have the same composition as the present Board, with as much continuity of membership as practicable.

- ii. An interim report describing what measures the School will take to address the conditions should be submitted to the RIBA Validation Committee for its meeting on 21 March 2007.

13. Commentary

13.1 Self-Appraisal and Developments since the last visit

The Board did not consider that the Critical Self-Appraisal, although very honest and detailed, was particularly relevant to Part Three. More pertinence to Part Three and less contextual information would have been more appropriate for its purpose. In particular the Critical Self-Appraisal did not provide an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Part Three course which the Board could have explored with staff and senior university management.

Since the 2002 Visiting Board many changes have taken place at the School. A major faculty restructuring exercise

was undertaken which saw the School of Architecture join Product Design and Interior Design to form a new Department of Product and Spatial Design. An ongoing staff reprofiling exercise was carried out, resulting in significant changes in staffing across all three courses. This exercise has now been concluded. A new head of school was appointed in 2003 and, more recently, a registered architect was appointed Subject Leader for Architecture with overall responsibility for all courses in architecture and architectural technology.

A new Part Three course leader has been appointed. A number of full time, part-time and fractional appointments have been made to the Part One and Part Two courses. All are registered architects and, while not currently connected with the Part Three course, the School hopes that they may be involved in the future.

13.2 Documentation and Arrangements for the Visit

The Board thanks the School for its hospitality during the visit. The staff were willing to provide additional information, such as student work, documentation and mark sheets at short notice. They were also happy to change the timetable to accommodate the Board's needs.

All documentation was forwarded in a timely manner. The Board considered that overall the documentation was adequate, with the exception of the concerns expressed in the previous section regarding the Critical Self-Appraisal and the course material was thorough. However it was noted that some of the documentation appeared to be out of date; for example, the Appendix 3 of the Course Guide (RIBA Practical Training Scheme: Objectives and Rules) contained guidance dated from 1988 to 1999. This has since been superseded by the Part Three regulations

implemented in 2002 and amended in 2003. The course documentation should be updated to reflect this. There was also a discrepancy with regard to the present examination passmark; in one area of the documentation it is recorded as 50%, in another area as 40%. Discussions with staff confirmed that it has been raised from 40% to 50%.

Some of the staff CVs appeared incomplete, not providing relevant Part Three assessment experience.

13.2.1 *Record of Academic Portfolios sampled during the visit*

The School provided the three lowest passes two middle passes, and two high passes from the most recent round of examinations (November 2005) (16 candidates took the examination, 15 passed). At the request of the Board the School also provided some work from the 2004 round of examinations.

13.3 **Responses made to the previous Visiting Board report (and to reports of any revisits) and External Examiner comments.**

The 2002 Visiting Board made no formal recommendations with regard to Part Three. However, the 2002 Board did offer various pieces of advice which the School has tried to follow.

The 2002 Board advised the School to develop the students' reflective capabilities, particularly in respect to their career evaluations and case studies, some of which were considered formulaic and not sufficiently critical.

In its documentation for the 2006 Visit and in discussion with the Board the School confirmed that they have tried

to encourage students to develop their reflective capabilities. Students are expected to demonstrate this chiefly through the Case Study and the Evaluation of Professional Practice, and this requirement is stated explicitly in the Course Handbook.

The 2002 Visiting Board also advised the School that the 'Part 3 course structure and consortia arrangements needs to be reviewed and clearly documented to ensure that from September 2002 it meets the new RIBA requirements for the recognition of programmes, courses and examinations at Part 3'.

Following this, the School undertook a formal review of the course structure and consortium arrangements to assess compliance with the new regulations and concluded that they did comply. Although the Department was technically following the RIBA Regulations in respect of the appointment of Professional Examiners, the Board was concerned that the ability of the Professional Examiners (known at De Montfort as External Assessors) and the External Examiner, who (in the opinion of the Board) between them did not have sufficient recent experience of examining at other schools and therefore had no benchmarks upon which to judge comparability.

The 2002 Board found 'evidence of overmarking at the upper end.' The School has sought to address this through its assessment system. However, the 2006 Board still found evidence of generous marking and that the School's stated assessment and quality assurance policies had not been followed. They did not believe this compromised threshold standards and were content that all criteria had been covered, but considered that the School should remain vigilant.

There is clear evidence that the School and University respond to External Examiners' reports. An action plan of issues raised and the School's response to them is produced. An SAB (Subject Authority Board) report is produced annually which provides a summary of course changes, student completion statistics and external examiners' comments.

13.4 **Context of the courses within the wider provision of the school and Faculty.**

The course is offered by the Leicester School of Architecture which is located within the Department of Product and Spatial Design in the Faculty of Art and Design. The School also offers validated full-time and part-time Part One and Part Two courses. Historically, the Part Three recruits heavily from the De Montfort Part Two. At present the Part Two cohorts are smaller than previously, although showing signs of recovery. These smaller numbers at Part Two may have an impact on numbers feeding through to Part Three. Part Three cohorts are small; this is sustainable due to the arrangements with the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham, which allows each school to share resources in respect of teaching and the setting of the examination. Each institution is individually responsible for assessment and awards of candidates enrolled with them.

The Vice-Chancellor assured the Board of the University's continuing support of all validated architecture courses through what is considered a temporary drop in numbers at Part Two. Professional education is a central tenet of the University's mission and ethos and the Board was assured of the future support at senior management level for Part Three. It is seen as being a flagship course for the

School as it is seen as completing the suite of professional architecture courses offered by the University.

13.5 **Detailed Commentary on the Course leading to Part Three Qualification**

13.5.1 Clarity, validity and achievement of course objectives
The overall aim of the Part Three course is 'to consolidate and integrate the educational and experiential background of students to ensure they are prepared for full entry to the Architectural profession' (RIBA Visiting Panel documentation).

This is made explicit in the aims and learning outcomes. The Board considered that the course's aims were clear, relevant and valid. This was endorsed by the comments of the candidates, who understood clearly what they could expect from the course and were content that this was achieved.

13.5.2 Course design and content
The course content and the examination paper are written jointly by the three universities.

This association also allows them to support relatively small cohorts while providing a high level of education. It enables them to enlist the services of lecturers who are experts in their respective fields. The interaction of students from differing educational and practice backgrounds is another advantage, much valued and appreciated by students and staff alike.

The programme lasts one year and is centred around three main study units: Marketing Management and Practice, Building Contract and Architects and the Law. Each of

the three schools (University of Sheffield, University of Nottingham and De Montfort) is responsible for one of the units, with students travelling to the relevant institution for lectures. Approximately 30% of Management, Practice and Law is taught as part of the De Montfort Part Two course; however there is no evidence that this disadvantages students from Sheffield University nor Nottingham University. Representatives from each school meet to discuss coverage and delivery. Assignments are updated regularly. Each study unit lasts three days and is assessed by a Work Assignment. Students must also complete a Case Study and an Evaluation of Practical Experience.

Students are interviewed approximately three months after registration on the course to discuss their PEDR records, the range and level of project management experience and their proposals for a Case Study. A decision may be made to defer embarking on the full programme at this point if their experience to date is not yet appropriate. The cycle of the full programme runs from January to November, with the study units taking place in January, April and June. Documentary submission takes place in September. At this point there is another opportunity to defer if the candidate is not yet ready for the written examination. The written examination takes place in October, and the Professional Interview is held in November.

After completion of the first unit and submission of the first written assignment, students are invited to a Recall Day to help them embark on the case study and practice the 'Interview Scenario' of the Professional Examination. Further preparation for the Examination is provided at a 'Masterclass' held in early autumn.

Students are encouraged to use the electronic PEDR (Professional Education and Development Record) system; old-style logbooks are accepted but at least 12 months' experience must be logged on the PEDR system. Certificates of Practical Experience are accepted if a candidate has been in practice a long time. Students must include drawings, samples of memos, letters/architects' instructions.

If a candidate's work is based in too few areas, the School tries to encourage them to broaden it, for example by undertaking more site visits. The assessors will challenge candidates on areas of knowledge in which they appear, from written evidence, to be deficient.

Students are informed of all significant dates in the course handbook.

13.5.3 Quality and coverage of the syllabus

The School provided the Board with mapping of the course against the RIBA/ARB criteria. This was helpful to an extent but the Board considered that it could have been more detailed.

On the basis of the sample of academic work examined, the Board confirmed that all candidates were meeting the RIBA/ARB Part Three validation criteria. The Board was content that the content and the delivery of the course were appropriate.

The Board was satisfied that, on the basis of the sample provided, the students' PEDR records were appropriate and in order. No evidence of non-compliant professional experience was found. Satisfactory monitoring of students' experience before presenting for the examination

was undertaken, with the School deferring candidates whom they believed not to be ready.

13.5.4 Progression within the course

Students' experience is carefully monitored and advice is given about whether they should undertake the oral examination. If they are considered not ready, they are advised to defer.

13.5.5 Assessment: methods, content and coverage, relative weightings, standards achieved

Course delivery is shared between the three institutions and the candidates undertake the same examination paper, but assessment is undertaken by each individual school. The School's assessment protocol and guidelines for External Assessors (the School's name for Professional Examiners) and External Examiners are stated in the course documentation.

The Board considered that the marking profile was unusual and overgenerous and there was evidence of grade inflation. They believe that this could be related to the inexperience of the Professional Examiners and the External Examiner and lack of guidance given to them by the School and the University. The Board is confident that the backgrounds, qualifications and skills of the individuals are entirely appropriate, but they had been given little or no guidance or support by the University. At the time of the visit, the external assessors were new and had had no experience elsewhere.

The passmark had also recently been raised from 40% to 50%, with 60% earning a commendation and 70% a distinction. The Board considered that this, coupled with

the lack of guidance given to the External Assessors, might have unintentionally encouraged generous marking. The distribution of commendations and distinctions was also unusual.

In the School's documentation there is reference to work being double-marked. From their subsequent conversations with staff, external assessors and inspection of work and marksheets, the Board considered that although it all work was clearly moderated, it was not all double-marked.

Assignments are double marked internally and the examination is marked externally. The examination is marked by one External Assessor and checked by another, but not formally double-marked. Assignments currently carry 60% of the weighting of the course. The Board considered that there was perhaps too much dependence on the assignments and that the relatively weightings of the course might be adjusted.

There is a standard University appeals procedure which applies equally to the Part Three course and all other De Montfort programmes.

The staff have not yet identified any problems with plagiarism. The examination is deliberately based around problems and scenarios to limit the opportunity for plagiarism.

13.5.6 Admissions

The majority of students on the Part Three course have completed either Part One or Part Two, more usually

both, at De Montfort University. All applicants are interviewed. This also helps to identify any shortfalls, for example within Management, Practice and Law, which can be covered during the course.

13.6 Professional and External examining arrangements

Formal responsibility for quality assurance at De Montfort is held by the Subject Authority Board. The Board was pleased to note that the Part Three programme was subject to the same QA procedures as other university programmes. Whilst there are some minor variations, the processes are essentially the same as regards monitoring, student feedback and external examiners' reports. External Examiners are required to assure the university's standards compared with other higher education institutions. The QA representatives were unsure whether the appropriate sub-group responsible for appointing external examiners had been aware of the RIBA's requirements.

Each institution appoints its own External Examiner. External Examiners' reports are not circulated around the institutions but the schools meet to discuss them.

The Board met the External Examiner and two of the External Assessors (Professional Examiners) attached to the course. The Board is grateful to the External Assessors for their candid discussion of their experience and the processes they had followed in examining the candidates and moderating the work. The External Assessors carry out the interviews and the External Examiners' chief responsibility is to ensure that the University's standards are applied.

The School had technically complied with the RIBA's Regulations for Professional Examiners which state that

“The RIBA will maintain a list of suitably qualified and experienced registered architects to act as Part 3 Professional Examiners for the Examination in Professional Practice and Management (Part 3). Part 3 course providers must select their Professional Examiners from this list. Only registered architects with extensive experience of architectural practice are eligible to be included on the list of Part 3 Professional Examiners.”

“The Professional Interview will be conducted by two examiners, one of whom will be a professional examiner selected from the list of Professional Examiners described in 3.1. At least one of the examiners must have examined at Part 3 on at least one other occasion. The following regulations apply to the professional examiner only.”

“The list of professional examiners will contain two categories. The first category is for members who are experienced professional examiners who have examined the Examination in Professional Practice and Management (Part 3) on at least one other occasion. The second category is for members who have no experience of acting as a professional examiner at Part 3. At least one professional examiner appointed by a course provider must be selected from category one of the list of professional examiners. Other professional examiners may be selected from either category, provided that no more than 60% of the total number of professional examiners are selected from category two of the list of professional examiners.”

The Board established, however, that the names of the most recently appointed Professional Examiners had been added to the RIBA's register at the time of their appointment to DMU. The Board thus had concerns as to

the ability of the Professional Examiners to contribute to decision making regarding the setting of marking standards having limited benchmarks against which to judge comparability.

Although not a formal requirement, the Board would have expected the External Examiner to be appointed from the RIBA's list of Professional Examiners. In addition, at present the External Examiner does not comply with the External Examiner category regulations on Page 13 of the "RIBA Description and Regulations for the Recognition of Courses and Examinations in Professional Practice and Management (Part 3) in the United Kingdom, which state under Appendix XX: External Examiner Guidance Note; Section 3, Appointment: 'At least one external examiner should be appointed with specific responsibility for the oversight of the Part Three programme, should one be offered by the school. **The expectation would be for this examiner to have both recent experience and knowledge of the Part 3 Examination process and criteria.**' (Bold in original). The Examiner's most recent period of service was at De Montfort in the mid 1990s and at another school for several years from 1988.

The Board was interested in the unusually high level of distinctions and commendations awarded in the most recent round of examinations. The External Examiner thought that they were a particularly strong group.

The external examiner looked at the lowest, middle and high passes and interviewed borderline candidates. The Board did not have a record of one particular interview.

One new external assessor said that some very able students did present, but acknowledged that marks given

were high as this particular assessor was marking alone, with no benchmarks. More guidance on weighting thresholds would have been welcome, particularly to a new appointee. This individual had also not been able to attend the training session before having to mark work. The two external assessors present during the Board said that they had had some concerns that they were marking a group of students in isolation (this refers to work marked prior to the Professional Interview), particularly as it was a relatively small cohort (16 finally presenting for examination). Their concerns were allayed to an extent when they moderated the marks together. But marking in isolation, they had no idea what was truly a commendation. One was not aware of the pass mark or the bandings when marking the work. They had received no criterion reference marking from the University. The Board advises the School to provide an induction session for external assessors and external examiners.

It was also acknowledged that some students perform better in the oral examination than in their written work and were able to make up some ground here.

The External Examiner was given the University QA documentation but the External Assessors received no guidance as to their role.

The External Examiner was comfortable with what he had reported over the last three years with regard to the signing off of the criteria. It was felt that the 2005 graduates were a particularly strong cohort.

13.7 Candidates

The Board was pleased to meet five Part Three candidates in a dedicated meeting and had had the opportunity to

speak to a sixth at lunch. The candidates came from a variety of backgrounds, some having taken Part One and Two elsewhere, and included an overseas student and mature students. The candidates were very happy with the guidance offered by De Montfort. They were very positive about their experiences and supportive of the staff and School. They are a small cohort with at present a very high completion rate.

The candidates particularly commended:

- The excellent grounding for practice. In addition to solid and relevant practical knowledge, the course had also given them confidence. In many cases it had spurred them to ask their practices if they could be assigned more relevant work. Their participation for the course had benefits for their colleagues in practice in that it instigated discussion and debate and helped colleagues keep up to date.
- The course is thorough and exceptionally well-organised. Some considered it went beyond what was specified in the criteria.
- It works well as discrete course, although those who had done the Part Two at DMU found the management and law components of the Part Three more like revision.
- The approachable nature of the course, particularly for students from non-traditional backgrounds.
- The opportunity to meet and discuss with candidates from the Universities of Nottingham and Sheffield, who brought different ideas, experience and attitudes to the discussion.
- It was attractive to employers.

The only suggestions for improvement made by candidates would be the inclusion of more practical study groups, rather than a great deal of written work, and perhaps wider coverage of contracts. One candidate was adamant that nothing needed to be improved. The School proactively seeks feedback from students after each study unit and at the end of the course.

The candidates were taking varying lengths of time to progress from Part 2 to Part 3. They did not believe it was necessarily taking a long time. It depended a great deal on the case study, which was more problematic for some students than others, as some practices were not very good about giving candidates appropriate jobs, although as stated earlier as they gained in confidence they felt able to ask for such work. On the whole however, the students believed that they were responsible for their own education and if a particular practice was not providing appropriate work, it was up to the candidate to speak up or to go elsewhere.

Fifteen candidates passed Part Three in the 2004/2005 session, from an initial intake of 31. Fifteen of the initial intake deferred due to the prescription status (at that time) of the De Montfort Part Two courses. In the present session (2005/2006) there are 25 students enrolled.

13.8 Staff

The staff meeting was used chiefly to explore issues of course coverage and assessment on which the Board needed further information.

There are four full-time staff attached to the course and visiting lecturers from a wide-range of specialities are engaged as appropriate. The Board also had the

opportunity over lunch to meet informally with local practitioners involved with the course.

Two of the four permanent staff attached to the course were registered architects. This was not an issue from the students' point of view, who were pleased that they were being taught by individuals professionally qualified in their subject area who could bring a different perspective to the proceedings. The Board hopes that there would be no further reduction in the input to the programme from registered architects.

13.9 Research;

At present there is little research attached to the Part Three, although some staff have published in their respective areas. The staff acknowledges that there is great scope for research in the professional practice of architecture which they intend to explore. The University is committed to research, and the Board looks forward to seeing how this develops.

13.10 Equal Opportunities:

The University's equal opportunities policies are embedded in its quality assurance procedures. The majority of those enrolled on the Part Three are male and over 50% describe themselves as white. Candidates' individual testimonies demonstrate that it is welcoming to, and supportive of, students from non-traditional backgrounds.

The staff gender balance is gradually improving. The School is committed ultimately to employ a staff body that is representative of the community it serves.

The building has recently been refurbished and provides universal access.

13.11 Resourcing and facilities;

The Board was content that the course was staffed adequately, helped by the association with the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham.

The physical resources at the Leicester School of Architecture were not viewed by the Part Three Visiting Board. However, the Board noted that since the last visit (to Part Two) in 2004, a major refurbishment programme has been undertaken.

14. Documentation Provided

Record of the documentation provided before and during the visit. Course structure diagrams for courses recommended for Validation (as provided by the school prior to the visit).

Prior to the Visit the School provided:

The Critical Self-Appraisal
Questionnaire
Supplementary Information
Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice Course
Guide November 2005

In the Base Room the School provided:

Staff CVs for Part 3
Course Guide to the Postgraduate Diploma in
Architectural Practice
Supplementary information
Critical self-appraisal

Written statements by candidates
Discipline Audit Trail Architecture 2005

Course materials

1. Units 1, 2 and 3. Programmes 2003-2004, 2004-2005
2. Study module handouts 2004-2005
3. Study module assignments 2004-2005
4. Examinations 2005, comprising guidance notes, scenario, Examination Papers, Suggested Answers
5. Marks 2004-2005
 - Spreadsheets
 - Summarised Employers' reports
 - Review logbooks/PEDR sheets
 - Sample marking sheets for study module assignments
 - Study module assignment marks
 - Sample marking sheets – professional interview

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice

1. Programme Template
2. Study units 1, 2, 3. Programmes 2003-2004
3. Study units 1, 2, 3 Programmes 2004-2005
4. Contributors 2003-2004, 2004-2005
5. Handouts 2004-2005, Unit 1, 2, 3
6. Assessment briefs. Study units 1, 2, 3, 2003-4, Study Units 1, 2, 3, 2004-2005
7. Examination 2003-4. Scenario, Examination questions, suggested answers. Examination 2004-2005. Scenario, Examination questions, suggested answers.
8. Mark sheets 2003/4;2004/5
9. Student feedback unit 1, 2, 2003-2004, whole course 2003-2004, Unit 1, 2, 3 2004-2005, whole course 2004-2005
10. External examiners' reports 2003-2004

11. Report to Subject Authority Board (De Montfort University) 2003-2004, 2004-2005.
12. Programme journal.