Programmes covered by the Periodic Review
1. The programmes covered by the Periodic Review were:
   - BSc Building Construction and Management
   - BSc Building Surveying
   - BSc Construction Management and Surveying
   - BSc Quantity Surveying
   - MSc Construction Cost Management
   - MSc Construction Management
   - MSc Inclusive Environments: Design and Management
   - MSc Intelligent Building: Construction and Management
   - MSc Project Management
   - MSc Renewable Energy: Technology and Sustainability

Date of the Periodic Review
2. The Review took place on Thursday, 22 and Friday, 23 May 2008.

Objectives of the Periodic Review
3. The objectives of the Review were to:
   - Review the effectiveness of the means by which Schools manage and assure the academic standards of the degree programmes under review and the quality of the learning opportunities provided;
   - Enable the School of Construction Management and Engineering to consider how it might enhance its portfolio of taught programmes and the learning experience of its students, and to consider the effectiveness of its approach;
   - Consider the future plans of the School of Construction Management and Engineering for its taught programmes
   - Enable an independent Panel to review this self-evaluation through consideration of documentation and discussions with staff and students;
   - Provide a means by which the School of Construction Management and Engineering was able to reflect on the success, enhancement and future development of the taught programmes that it offered;
   - Identify examples of good and effective practice;
   - Consider whether the programmes under review should continue to run for a further or initial period of up to six years, as appropriate.

Conduct of the Periodic Review
4. The Review was conducted by a panel chaired by the Joint Faculty Director of Teaching and Learning for the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Life Sciences. The Panel also comprised three other internal members of academic staff from outside the School of Construction Management and Engineering and two external members, one from the University of Greenwich and one from Ridge and Partners LLP, representing the property and construction sector.
The Panel received a range of documentation in advance of the Review including a Self-Evaluation Document prepared by the School and relevant programme specifications. During the Review visit, the Panel considered other documentation and saw the School’s laboratory and computing facilities. The Panel met relevant staff from the School and current students studying from a selection of the degree programmes under review.

Evidence base
5. In addition to meetings held with academic staff and current students the Panel considered a wide range of evidence, including examples of student work with staff feedback, copies of programme handbooks, minutes of Boards of Studies, External Examiners reports and reports from professional bodies.

External peer contributors to process
6. External members of the Review Panel were appointed by the Faculty of Science Board for Teaching and Learning, after considering nominations from the School of Construction Management and Engineering. The role of these external members was to provide subject expertise and to provide an expert judgement of the validity and appropriateness of the programmes under Review.

7. During the Review the external members focussed on aims and learning objectives and curricula and assessment.

Overview of the main characteristics of the programmes covered by the Periodic Review
8. The overall aim of the School in designing its programmes is to respond to its perception of the property and construction sector’s requirements for professionals. A suite of four undergraduate programmes is offered by the School. These share a common first two years with option modules in the third year that allow students to specialise and that determine their eventual degree title.

The School is planning a strategic review of undergraduate programmes considering their future direction. This review of programmes will have an employers’ forum. The panel welcomed the news of this review.

Staff in the School are very research active and have regular contact with industry practice. As a result the School has an excellent reputation within the property and construction industry. The School’s graduates are also well-regarded within the industry and have excellent employment prospects.

Conclusions on innovation and good practice
9. The Panel identified the following examples of excellence and good practice that it wishes to commend:

- Resource room – this is an excellent feature that operates as the student hub for the School and aids the development of student-centred learning.
- Reputation – the School has a strong reputation in industry both for its research and its students. While congratulating the School on this the Panel notes that it must continue to work to maintain this standing.
- CE2CS1 Sustainability 1 – the Panel commends the content of this module covering an important current issue in the built environment.
- Research influence on teaching – research activity within the School informs its teaching although the connection is not generally made explicit to students.
- Use and management of visiting lecturers – the Panel was impressed by the School’s practice in supporting and checking visiting lecturers and the material they will deliver.
• Enthusiasm of key staff – the Panel commends key staff within the School for their dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism.
• Employability of graduates – the School’s graduates have an excellent employment record and are well-regarded by property and construction industry employers.
• BSc structure – the structure of the School’s undergraduate degrees allows students the flexibility to choose a final award that suits their needs, supported by appropriate advice from staff.

Conclusions on quality and standards
10. The Panel concludes that:

• Intended aims of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are appropriate, although they can be reviewed to express more clearly the differentiation between degree titles.
• Intended learning outcomes of the programmes are appropriate. The School must be aware of revised standards set by RICS when conducting internal review of its programmes.
• Quality and standards are being achieved.
• Programme specifications are being delivered.

Conclusions on currency and validity of the programmes under review
11. The Panel concluded that the programmes under review remained current and valid in practice although this was not always expressed in programme documentation.

Recommendations
12. The Panel recommends to the Joint Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning for Science and Life Sciences that the following programmes should be re-approved to run for a further six years, subject to the programme team addressing the issues shown below:

• BSc Building Construction and Management
• BSc Building Surveying
• BSc Construction Management and Surveying
• BSc Quantity Surveying
• MSc Construction Cost Management
• MSc Construction Management
• MSc Inclusive Environments: Design and Management
• MSc Intelligent Building: Construction and Management
• MSc Project Management
• MSc Renewable Energy: Technology and Sustainability

Issues to be addressed:

Advisable:
• The School should inform students of the research that is carried out in the School and make greater mention of the research that is carried out by its staff in its information for potential applicants.
• The School should consider the rationale for its current assessment policy and articulate a School policy on assessment, especially as regards testing skills that may best be assessed outside traditional examinations.
• Aims and outcomes of the four undergraduate programmes should be reviewed and redefined to make their differentiation more explicit.
• The School should establish clear policies that comply with University policies on quality management.
• The School should improve its practices for reporting back of quality management issues.
• The School should update programme handbooks to include subject-specific examples of plagiarism.
• The School should review the assessment load on each tutor and allocate help when marking loads are high to enable swift return of assessment feedback to students.
• The School should set up a Postgraduate Staff Student Committee.
• The School should reduce its over-dependence on a few key individuals and consider how it could function better, and more obviously, as a team with common policies and practices.
• The School should consider setting up an industrial liaison committee in some appropriate form.
• The School should further consider whether its standard offer conditions for undergraduate programmes should be increased to reflect its reputation and ability to attract good quality students.

Desirable:
• Programme documentation should be revised to show that Reading construction programmes address current issues and are informed by research and liaison with industry.
• The School should ensure that its planned review of undergraduate programmes is carried out in a timely manner.
• The School should consider whether there are ways to take advantage of placements that will gain some formal recognition and benefit students;
• The School should consider whether more sharing of modules and practice across the full-time postgraduate programmes could be introduced.
• Labelling of the level of modules in (currently C,I,H, although soon to change to a numerical scheme) should be shown in handbooks.
• The School should consider the clarity of undergraduate progression rules and whether their being stricter than the standard University requirement can be justified.
• The School should consider the role of Institution-Wide Language Programme modules in Part 3 of undergraduate degrees, especially their level.
• The School should consider the clarity of requirements for an award in MSc Intelligent Buildings and whether their being stricter than the standard University requirement can be justified.

Summary of actions to be taken in response to the Periodic Review

????