

Congratulations to Cohort 18 on matriculating

On Tuesday 20th September 2011 the new IDBE cohort put on gowns at Wolfson College and were formally received into the University and College by Senior Tutor Jane McLarty (centre front), in the matriculation ceremony.



The rain started to pour just after the photo was taken, but by then everyone was inside enjoying their first Cambridge Formal Hall. It was still falling by the time the port and dessert wine (passed to the left, of course) were finished, but no-one seemed to mind.

...and to Cohort 15 (and others) on graduating



The hard work was all worthwhile for seventeen IDBE students who collected their masters degrees on July 23rd. They are shown here at Wolfson, in rather better weather, in 'sub-fusc' and gowns.

IStructE bursaries awarded to two students

For the first year ever, the Institution of Structural Engineers awarded a bursary to two students, Chamindika Ariyaratne and Nick Mills, in cohort 18.

Invitation to debate at Cambridge Union

The IDBE is pleased to invite all contributors and alumni to join us at a debate on the motion **'This house believes that low carbon buildings are unaffordable'** on Wednesday 14th December, 18:45, Cambridge Union.

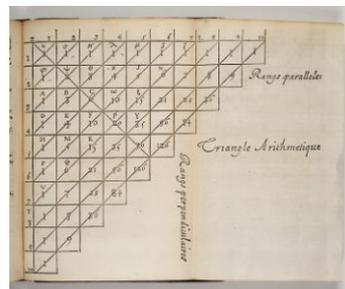
Hidden treasure at the University Library

Every year the new IDBE cohort is given an introduction to the University Library. Unless architecturally excited by Giles Gilbert Scott's industrial architecture, you might assume, how awfully dull. In fact librarian Emma Coonan gives an inspirational and individual take on what to find in the library, a flavour of which is given in her blog on *Here be dragons*:

'How do you become informed about your landscape? What acts as your compass? The library is a good place to start – because while the library's physical manifestation is finite, libraries link to whole worlds of information.

'The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries From any of the hexagons one can see, interminably, the upper and lower floors ...I say that the Library is unending.'
(Borges, 'The Library of Babel')

From this perspective the library's resources – the catalogue, the e-resources portal – become tools that scholars can use to orientate themselves in the knowledge landscape and discover new territory. Yet no resource comes close to being as important as the scholar's built-in compass: critical vision. It is the ability to analyse and evaluate information, whatever its source or format, for accuracy, reliability and scholarly worth that ultimately enables the academic endeavour – whether you're an eminent researcher or a fresher undergrad.'



Pascal's Treatise on the Arithmetic Triangle (1654), Cambridge University Library

IDBE 18 studio project: daylighting

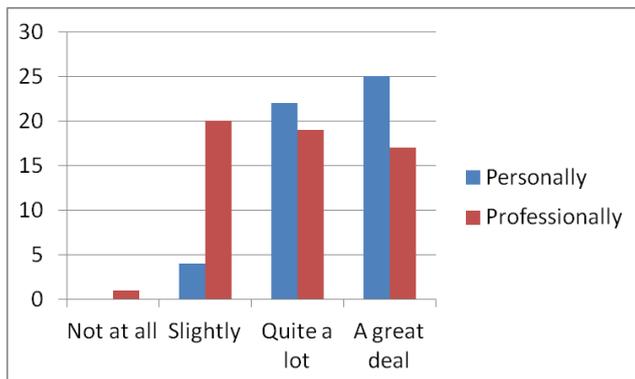
After a visually stunning lecture from Nick Baker on the history of daylighting design, the studio project teams of IDBE 18 students designed and built their own models to test different facades in the artificial sky in the Architecture Department, as pictured below.



What did our alumni get from the IDBE?

Thank you to the 66 IDBE alumni who responded to the online survey sent in October this year (43% response rate). The feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the course, and a taste is given here.

Q1 Has attending the IDBE course benefitted you?

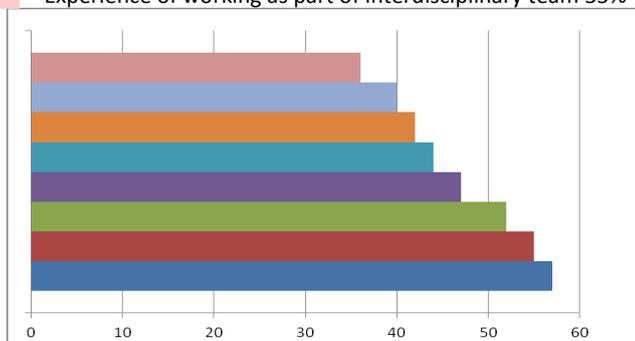


92% felt that the course had benefitted them personally either 'a great deal' (49%) or 'quite a lot' (43%). This was higher than those who felt the course had benefitted them professionally, although these numbers were still high (30% and 33%). Indeed not one person felt that the course had not benefitted them at all personally, and only one thought it hadn't benefitted him/her professionally.

Q2 What did you gain from the course?

Respondents could choose from a list of twelve pre-written answers, and also add their own. The top eight answers which were ticked by more than 50%, were:

- Stimulating and thought-provoking lectures 88%
- An opportunity to explore areas of personal interest 85%
- Confidence in writing and research 80%
- A mind-expanding experience 72%
- A wide and supportive network of enthusiastic and curious professionals from across the world 68%
- A wider appreciation of design for built environment 65%
- Time to reflect on personal practice 62%
- Experience of working as part of interdisciplinary team 55%



A flavour of the additional free text answers: 'the opportunity to pick the brains of some of the industry's leading thinkers/practitioners', 'huge satisfaction', 'a new job', 'the fulfilment of a long-held personal ambition', 'a

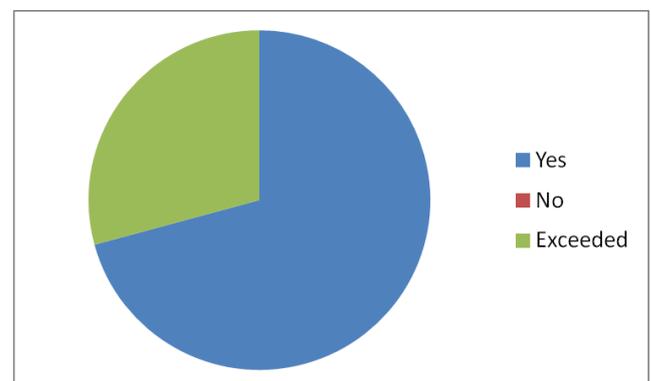
breath of fresh air', 'a better understanding of my beliefs and values', 'a unique opportunity to look in to my chosen career in great detail', 'Confidence', 'Establishing firm friendships with some rising stars'.

Q4 Was there anything you hoped to gain from the course but didn't?

26 respondents gave suggestions which included more design project work, more focus on the academic research and more technical knowledge. As there is limited time, we cannot offer more of all of these, and suspect the diverse responses are a function of the diverse backgrounds, and futures, of our students. Some comments are no longer the case, such as problems with accessing research papers from abroad. 17 respondents said that there was nothing else they had hoped to gain, and 21 did not answer. One had hoped to be young again - we're sorry that this wish wasn't (quite) granted.

Q5 Were your overall expectations met?

71% said that their expectations of the course had been met. All of the remaining 29% said that their expectations had been exceeded!



Q6 Have you changed career path, been promoted, or moved company as a direct or indirect result of the course?

62% of respondents believed that the course had had an impact on their career (all, I'm pleased to say, in a positive direction!). Answers included some who had gained the confidence and kudos to set up their own businesses, a few who had moved into academia as a result, others who had changed track having worked out what they were really interested in, and many who felt that the course had given them increased confidence and had opened doors for them professionally.

Q9 Any other comments?

Many used this space to reiterate their enjoyment of the course and to express their gratitude to the course team for their 'tender support'. One response was 'All qualified persons should attend this course!!!!'. Not sure that we could quite manage those sorts of numbers, but thank you for the recommendation.



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