



Minutes of the Postgraduate and part-time tutor liaison committee

Monday 29th November 2021

12.30 – 1.30 pm

Microsoft Teams

Present

Dr Catriona Pickard, Director of Undergraduate Studies – Chair (CP)
Professor Ewen Cameron, Head of School (EC)
Dr Benedikt Eckhardt, Graduate School Deputy Director, PGR (BE)
Dr Manuel Fernandez-Gotz, Head of Archaeology (MFG)
Dr Lucy Grig, Head of Classics (LG)
Dr Gayle Davis, Deputy Head of History (GD),
deputising for Dr Fabian Hilfrich, Head of History
Dr Guillaume Robin, Director of Teaching, Archaeology (GR)
Dr Calum Maciver, Director of Teaching, Classics
Dr Richard Oosterhoff, Director of Teaching, History pre-honours (RO)
Anne Brockington, Tutor and Demonstrator Co-ordinator (AB)
Kerry Penman, HR (IC)
Monique De Pace, Archaeology representative (MDP)
Richard Kendall, Classics representative (RK)
Daniel Heathcote, History representative (DH)
David Ritchie, History representative (DR)

Apologies

Dr Fabian Hilfrich, Head of History
Kelli Conley, History representative

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
CP welcomed Dr Gayle Davis, Deputy Head of History deputising for Dr Fabian Hilfrich at this meeting. The apologies were noted.
2. Approve minutes from last meeting
The minutes of the last meeting on 25 th October 2021 were approved.
3. Matters Arising
GH Tutor and Demonstrators digest It had been queried if it was possible to link the digest with the staff digest. CP reported

that this would be problematic because of the different schedules for these and it is felt that it was important for GH tutors and demonstrators to have their own digest with relevant information contained in one place and relevant information also included in the staff digest.

McMillan Room

The issues with access to the McMillan had been resolved.

RK asked if events were possible to be held in the McMillan Room. EC advised that this may be possible but depends on the type of event and the number of participants. Any events that people wish to hold should be referred to EC or Julie Lockley who can advise on the possibilities.

PGPT representatives

A call for additional representatives was included in the Tutor and Demonstrator digest but no responses had been received. The members of the committee were asked to forward names of anyone interesting in representing their Subject Area on the committee.

Reports from Subject Area representatives

Archaeology

MDP reported that she had not received much feedback but in general queries had centred around the developing Covid situation and any possible changes for semester 2, such as a return to online teaching. She had received a lot of really positive feedback from students about in person teaching who like the face to face contact. EC advised that the situation is being looked at, for example with the move from limit of 50 to 120 capacity under review. This is under consideration at University level as the approach would need to be consistent across the university. Further details are expected soon.

Classics

RK also had not received much feedback but echoed the concerns about next semester. This is especially around issues arising from changes in government policy affecting tutors who have plans to return home for Christmas and are then stuck. CP advised that it is an evolving situation that the University is constantly reviewing. It is currently a case of watch this space and tutors and demonstrators will be kept informed as soon as we are able.

History

DH also did not have much to report back. One query he had was around the late return of essays to pre-honours students. He has on occasion faced questions about from upset students in tutorials and would it find it useful to have some more information around the reasons for this. CP explained that students should always be advised of any delays. Late return may be due to workload issues, especially currently with increased numbers of students. The aim is to ensure meaningful and comprehensive feedback and a longer turnaround time has been agreed with College for a number of courses this semester. Delays can also be due to staff illness and it can be the case that work can only be returned when all marking is complete meaning a delay with one lot of marking can hold up all. Once the markers have completed their marking the work then requires moderation, which can be time consuming, especially for a course with multiple markers or where remarking is required. RK, as a tutor for the Writing Centre, noted that first year students especially struggle if not got feedback for first exercise when writing essay. CP advised that course organisers are encouraged to use generic feedback sessions to help with this if there are going to be delays. LG also noted that when work is handed in late by students coming in after the deadline, with or without an extension, does have a knock-on effect on marking deadlines. Also if issues like this are raised to tutors they should always be passed on to the course organiser for them to deal with. GD noted that she is very happy to be concerned if any tutors have specific concerns about late return of work for individual

History courses and can investigate whether issues are due to information not having been read or there are communication problems. She noted that from her experiences the UGTO are checking with markers and course organisers about any delays can be anticipated and students notified to help manage expectations. DH noted that the occasion in question the delay had only been a few hours, and the UGTO did a good job of communicating to students.

DR had been asked how the work to rule would affect the marking of essays. EC advised that he understood the UCU guidance to mean that staff should not exceed their standard hours, for tutors the hours allocated for each task. DR also reported that students in his tutorials had enjoyed the return to in person teaching.

4. AOB

EC asked that messages on Learn concerning the upcoming industrial action be restricted to practical arrangements. It was agreed during previous strike action that this would be happen and that Learn would not be used for messages encouraging students to be involved in the issues surrounding the action.

The committee were asked if they could let AB know if they had a preference for the meetings being online or in person.

CP thanked all the tutors and demonstrators for their hard work this semester which has been much appreciated and looks forward to seeing them next semester.

Date of next meeting: Week 6, Semester 2 - Monday 28th February - 12.30 to 1.30 pm