



Minutes of the Postgraduate and part-time tutor liaison committee

Tuesday 31st October 2023

1.00 to 2.00 pm

Room G.14, William Robertson Wing and Microsoft Teams

Present

Dr Alasdair Raffe, Director of Teaching – Chair (AR)
Professor Ben Russell, Director of Postgraduate Research (BR)
Professor Jon Henderson, Head of Archaeology (JH)
Dr Benedikt Eckhardt, Head of Classics (BE)
Professor Diana Paton, Head of History (DP)
Dr Ulf Schoop, Director of Teaching, Archaeology (US)
Dr Zubin Mistry, Director of Teaching, History pre-honours (ZM)
Dr Tereza Valny, Director of Writing Centre (TV)
Jess Nutt, Archaeology representative (JN)
Clara Lazzoni, Classics representative (CL)
Katie Comper, History representative (KC)
Bo van Broekhoven, History representative (BvB)
Richard Kendall, Writing Centre representative (RK)
Anne Brockington, Tutor and Demonstrator Co-ordinator (AB)
Daniel Gaines (DG), deputising for Kerry Penman, HR

Apologies

Professor Emma Hunter, Head of School (EH)
Dr Caroline Proctor, Director of Professional Services (CP)
Dr Aaron Peltari, Director of Teaching, Classics (AP)
Beatrice Bersani, Classics representative (BB)
Kerry Penman, HR (KP)

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| 1. Welcome and Apologies |
| AR welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves. The apologies above were noted. |
| 2. Approval of the minutes from last meeting |
| The minutes of the last meeting on 6 th April 2023 were approved with one small amendment to the list of those present. |
| 3. Matters Arising |
| Peer observation |

JN confirmed that she had been contacted about Peer observation and JH plans to use the Classics model for Archaeology with observation spreads across the subject area academics.

ZM advised that for History peer observation is mandatory for new tutors but optional for those continuing.

AR noted that best practice is for each tutor to be observed once a year so that they all could receive the benefits of observation. BR highlighted that it is useful in the context of the EdTA and later references. ZM noted that it might help for AR to send an email to staff at the beginning of session or each semester explaining the expectations for peer observation.

AB will send the Teaching Directors a list of tutors for their subject area once settled at the beginning of the academic year to aid the process.

4. Convenor's updates

AR updated the committee on changes to the length of extensions for coursework. Standard extensions have been reduced to 4 days with the extra time adjustment remaining at 7 days and special circumstances also available as before. Tutors were asked to help in making sure students are aware of the change, especially Year 2 students who had been used to 7 days last year.

It was noted that meeting the 3-week feedback turnaround was a high priority with both College and the School.

5. Feedback on Induction, including Induction Follow Up Meeting

It was felt that it was good to have a chance to feedback and ask questions. It had not been clear to tutors and demonstrators this year if the Follow Up Meeting was mandatory. It was suggested that an informal coffee with the Teaching Directors might work as an alternative option. DG is speaking to Enda Delaney about the format of the staff Follow Up and AB will liaise with him about options for next year.

Some GH staff had mentioned the difficulty of understanding university acronyms. DG will forward the glossary included in the Staff Handbook to be adapted for use for GH.

RK noted that the Time Cards sessions had been felt to be helpful.

6. Tutor absence

ZM explained that the question of standardising procedures for course administrators and course organisers in dealing with tutor absences had been raised. He is working with the Teaching Services Manager on this and will present their findings and suggestions to the School Education Committee.

They are looking at the different scenarios in which this occurs to develop guidance on when a tutorial should be cancelled rather than cover looked for. AR noted that the requirements of adjustments should be checked with regard to tutorial changes. The guidance will supplement the guidance in the Tutor and Demonstrator Handbook and will take into account HR policies and regulations.

The subject area reps noted that there had been practical difficulties arranging cover this semester and it would be helpful to communicate the process again once the procedures for course organisers and course admins have been agreed.

7. Reports from Subject Area representatives

History

KC advised that the subject area reps had held a meet and greet for tutors and demonstrators in the McMillan Room last Wednesday. BvB noted that no History tutors came to the event and there appears to be a lack of knowledge about reps and their role amongst the tutors and demonstrators.

KC had received complaints about the removal of the third-floor couches which tutors had been using them for informal meetings with students. It had also been noted that preparatory materials vary across History courses, especially with regard to marking on special readings.

Archaeology

The Archaeology 2A demonstrators had raised some queries about the format of their work. AB had been emailed separately and is due to meet with the course organiser to discuss and will feed back to JH and US.

Classics

CL noted a lack of supporting material for tutors on some courses, especially languages and for gobbets. Also a difference in the use of the marking scale between courses, especially with language courses had been observed.

Writing Centre

The Writing centre now operates on Teams. A few teething problems have been experienced and there has been a drop off attendance, perhaps as a result.

It was noted that assistance with dissertations is not covered by Writing Centre tutors. If Writing Centre tutors are asked for this the student should be directed to Tereza Valny.

RK reported that no concerns had been raised. The Writing Centre continues operating until the end of April and requests for sessions are still being received. There have been a lot of honours but not so far any MSc students participating.

8. People and Money Time Cards

There were no additional issues with People and Money Time Cards and it was decided to remove this as a standing item. It will be added to the agenda if and when necessary.

9. AOB

No other items were raised.

Date of next meeting:

Week 11, Tuesday 28th November, 1.00 to 2.00 pm, Room G.14