



Minutes of the Postgraduate and part-time tutor liaison committee

Thursday 9th March 2023

11.00 am to 12.00 noon

Room 2M.24, William Robertson Wing and Microsoft Teams

Present

Dr Alasdair Raffe, Director of Teaching – Chair (AR)
Professor Emma Hunter, Head of School (EH)
Dr Ben Russell, Director of Postgraduate Research (BR)
Dr Jon Henderson, Head of Archaeology (JN)
Dr Benedikt Eckhardt, Head of Classics (BE)
Dr Gayle Davis (GD), deputising for Professor Diana Paton, Head of History
Dr Richard Oosterhoff, Director of Teaching, History pre-honours (RO)
Jess Nutt, Archaeology representative (JN)
Richard Kendall, Classics representative (RK)
Katie Comper, History representative (KC)
Lisa Cowan, History representative (LC)
Daniel Gaines (DG), deputising for Kerry Penman, HR
Anne Brockington, Tutor and Demonstrator Co-ordinator (AB)

Apologies

Dr Caroline Proctor, Director of Professional Services (CP)
Professor Diana Paton, Head of History (DP)
Dr Guillaume Robin, Director of Teaching, Archaeology (GR)
Dr Sandra Bingham, Director of Teaching, Classics (SB)
Abigail Fletcher, History representative (AF)
Bo van Broekhoven, History representative (BvB)
Kerry Penman, HR (KP)

1. Welcome and Apologies
AR welcomed everyone to the meeting and they introduced themselves. The apologies were noted.
2. Approval of the minutes from last meeting
The minutes of the last meeting on 28 th November 2022 were approved.
3. Matters Arising
AR advised that the Student Support and Experience team will again this semester be holding sessions about exams. These are a general session on 5 th April and a mock exam

on 26th April. Further details can be found via the front page of the school website and GH digests.

Convenor's updates

AR thanked the PhD representatives for their involvement in the Internal Periodic Review meetings earlier in the week and the helpful feedback they had given to the panel.

The convenor would be particularly interested in hearing from the subject area reps about the types of support students are asking tutors about, the support they are receiving from course organisers, levels of student attendance and experience of the peer support being developed in school.

4. Reports from Subject Area representatives

Archaeology

JN advised that student tutorial attendance had gone down, to around 50%, with tutors often not receiving emails of explanation either. This is possibly due to confusion around strike days.

It was noted that there have been instances where tutors have not received answers to emails from course organisers and course admin. Tutors should contact the Heads of Subject if they are not receiving replies from course organisers. AB will ask that course admin let tutors know if they have referred questions on and are awaiting replies. The complaints matrix information for staff will also be made available to tutors.

Tutors would welcome more information on adjustments and how to implement them during Induction. Some tutors had also asked if it would be possible to do first aid training.

Classics

RK passed on to BR and the School the appreciation of the Classics tutors on scholarships for receiving payment for 2022/2023 hours. EH confirmed that thanks were also due to College.

Student attendance and engagement have remained fine.

RK has received interest from other Classics tutors in joining the committee as a rep. AB and RK will liaise over this.

History

LC noted that there had been variable attendance during the period of strike action. A particular issue was where lectures were cancelled but tutorials not.

KC sought clarification of the "HCA measures to mitigate the impact of industrial action" email in relation to topics covered during strike weeks. It was confirmed that the topics due to be covered in missing tutorials as well as lectures would be excluded from exam papers.

Attendance had remained reasonably stable but engagement had reduced.

Students are concerned about exams, especially due to delay in publication of the exam schedule, now expected the week of 20th March. It was confirmed that student queries about exams should be directed to the course organiser.

5. People and Money Time Cards

AB advised that almost all February Time Cards had been approved and all submitted would be by the 10th March deadline.

JN and RK reported that tutors and demonstrators were now getting more used to the system and found the reminder emails helpful.

6. Experience of Peer Observation of Teaching

The subject area reps. reported that they had found peer observation positive and helpful experience. However it does not appear to be happening consistently.

The Classics system spreads observation across the whole subject area with the Teaching Director allocating staff a tutor to observe. A reminder to contact the tutors was given at this week's subject area meeting. Some course organisers may also arrange a separate observation of tutors on their course.

Currently in History course organisers will contact tutors to ask if they are interested in peer observation in order to develop their teaching experience. The aim is for tutors to be observed once a year rather than on all courses. History may look if they can look at using a similar system to Classics.

In Archaeology one review in semester 1 had involved a Classical Archaeologist which had led to some difficulties with different subject area approaches but otherwise they had been a positive experience.

It was suggested that tutors in their first year of tutoring should be prioritised for observation.

RK noted that peer observation is a component of the IAD teaching accreditation and BR confirmed that tutors can also ask their PhD supervisors to observe them if they wish.

7. AOB

RK suggested that a representative for the Writing Centre tutors should be invited to join this committee.

BR advised the committee of the two recommendations of the IPR relating to tutoring. These were that there should be more advice given on the limits and boundaries for tutoring and that all course organisers should ensure they are providing enough information to tutors.

Date of next meeting:

Week 11 - Thursday 6th April 2023 - 11.00 am to 12.00 noon, Room 2M.24, William Robertson Wing and Microsoft Teams