

Teaching Committee Minutes

Wednesday 12th April, 2pm, Room 4.31/4.33

Present: Alan Smaill (Convenor)
Björn Franke (Director of Teaching)
Christophe Dubache
Sharon Goldwater
Gillian Bell
Colin Stirling
Paul Anderson
Mary Cryan

In Attendance: Gregor Hall (administrator)

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Iain Murray
Frank Keller
Helen Pain

- 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 3. Matters Arising** - reviewing actions from March 2017 Teaching Committee:

4: Changing DMMR from closed book to open book - Kousha Eteessami & Colin Stirling.

ACTION: ITO to (a) let externals know of the change in S1 of 2017/2018 and (b) check rubric. New lecturer to prepare sample question. Stuart Anderson & Martin Wright are doing duty allocation for 2017/2018 – Colin to inform the eventual lecturer. [emailed 05/04/2017]

RESPONSE (from Vicky Swann): “Dear Colin and Kousha, for information, as this is a custom rubric it is something that the course lecturer would update rather than the ITO. I'll make a note to inform the external of this change.”

5: Revised Exam Scrutiny Process - Alan Smaill

ACTION: Alan Smaill to produce a version of this form for Committee. [emailed 05/04/2017, chased 11/04/2017]

RESPONSE: Alan Smaill to bring to Committee – see item 3.2

6: Ordinary Degree Handling - Björn Franke & Gillian Bell

ACTION: Björn Franke to form a team to put together a full proposal to be presented at the next TC. [emailed 05/04/2017, chased 11/04/2017]

RESPONSE: Will produce a proposal for next TC – 10th May 2017.

8. Director of Teaching's report - Björn Franke

ACTION: DoT to seek out interest in the Deputy DoT role. [emailed 05/04/2017, chased 11/04/2017]

RESPONSE: outstanding.

9. AOCB: Kami Vaniea is Coordinator of Equality and Diversity and also performs outreach functions. The creation of an Academic Outreach Officer would ease the burden on the C.E.D and improve the Outreach function. Such a post would require an academic.

ACTION: DoT and Helen Pain to generate a proposal for the creation of the role of Academic Outreach Officer. [emailed 05/04/2017]

RESPONSE: Johanna and Martin have agreed to this, and it does not need to go to policy committee. Helen will find an academic to fill the role of Academic Outreach and Public Engagement Officer.

3.1 Exam Marking Guide and Deadlines – DoT & ITO (from 8th Feb meeting, item 6):

DoT went over the Guide and explained the reasons for this change – the tension between the need to release marks in a timely fashion to students (which amongst other things would aid course selection) versus the time needed to enter and check the marks in time for Board of Examiners. The idea of releasing provisional marks to students was discussed as this is done by some Schools. The Committee was reminded that 2016-17 will be the last year using Theon, after which marks will be entered directly into Theon, which can accommodate release of provisional marks. A comment was made that a guide is only useful if read, and some experienced markers may ignore the guide. The Committee approved the Guide.

ACTION: ITO to start using the guide for the May diet of exams.

3.2 Revised Exam Scrutiny Process – Alan Smaill (from 15th March meeting item 5):

Alan presented his policy to the Committee. The DoT stated the need for the Year Organisers to contact their lecturers about this process. Teaching Committee approved this policy.

ACTION: ITO to add policy to website, and email Y.O's and Convenors.

4. **Director of Teaching's report - Björn Franke:** the DoT mentioned issues including as the late return of coursework. The supervision of MSc dissertations was also raised, especially as the large cohort this year means more work for the supervisors. The need to make appropriate arrangements for staff holidays was brought up so that students are not left requiring support during these periods, especially close to the hand in date in August.

The employment of two or maybe three Teaching Fellows was tabled. Several possible uses of their time were suggested, but it was agreed that their roles would very much depend upon the skillsets of the individuals concerned, so discussion of exactly what they would do would be for a future meeting.

ACTION: DoT to contact MSc Dissertation co-ordinators regarding holiday preparation.

5. **Recruitment Committee Report - Sharon Goldwater:** MSc Selection Issues – SG detailed how Boris Grot and Kousha Eteessami have expressed interest in helping with Data Collection. At this stage they have not settled on the most useful data so SG suggested they meet with Ajitha Rajan (once back in Edinburgh) and College Admissions to discuss this. It was hoped to have changes in place by the end of the summer. Another issue was that information for language qualifications is not always complete, as applicants send documents after application, which are not always uploaded. Information about deposits may not be helpful this year as the Fee Deposit Model was only deployed in December so we are half way through the year; next year's data should be more useful.

6. AOCB

6.1 Year Organiser Report – Alan Smail: Alan brought up the point of the timing of the Year Organiser reports. This might usually be after the yearly Staff Student Liaison Committee but the weekly representatives meeting may have reduced the necessity for this, as Year Organisers were invited. One member was of the opinion that they gleaned more from meetings with their Personal Tutees than from the SSLC. Another said that the structure of a Yearly Report could be different, dealing with larger, curriculum-centred issues.

ACTION: DoT to confirm that Yearly SSLC meetings are no longer held. Issue of when the Year Organisers should report still outstanding.

6.2 Coursework Deadlines – Mary Cryan: MC raised the negative effect that late coursework deadlines have on project work, some students (especially MSc ones) neglecting their project work in favour of coursework. Considerable discussion followed regarding the trade-off between taking tutorials and supervising projects. The late setting of coursework deadlines was agreed to be a problem and it was suggested that a more transparent system of recording deadlines would be of help. If such a system was in place the Year Organisers would be able to chase those lecturers with outstanding deadlines, and students could see deadline “bottlenecks” more clearly.

ACTION: ITO to look into the creation of a School of Informatics webpage (perhaps with a Google Calendar) that lists all coursework deadlines.